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SPECULATION is rife as to the character of Mr. Snowden's Budget. There will almost certainly be new taxation, since the financial year just ended showed a nominal deficit of some £28 millions. Mr. Snowden had budgeted for a small surplus, but the revenue fell short of his estimates by some £13½ millions, while expenditure exceeded by £12 millions the total originally planned. This increased expenditure was due in the main to the unexpectedly heavy cost of Unemployment Insurance. As for revenue, its falling-off reflects, of course, the severity of last year's trade depression. Nevertheless, the deficit is only a nominal one. Interest rates were so low that £14 millions was saved in this department; and the New Sinking Fund reached the handsome total of £66¾ millions. This means that, on balance, £44½ millions were made available for debt redemption; and that the year was actually a better one, from this point of view, than 1924-5, 1925-6, or 1929-30. In short, the country's financial position is still a very strong one. We trust, therefore, that Mr. Snowden will not be led away by the panic-mongers into a wholesale imposition of indirect taxes; better that he should relax, for a year or two, those heroic standards of debt-redemption which even this year have been successfully attained.

In this connection, a peculiar speech made on Saturday by the First Lord of the Admiralty has aroused much interested comment. "We have had for some time," said Mr. Alexander, "an Economic Council advising the Government, and . . . the view is that we cannot maintain the present standard of life of the population of the country, and that wages must come down. If you dare not face industrial stress and the consequences of such a policy, then, after all, you can do it by the middle method of applying a tariff on the goods that the workers consume." The First Lord hastened to supplement this speech with another, in which he declared that his "impromptu" remarks had been misconstrued. Certainly we should be sorry to think that the Cabinet had convinced itself that our standard of life must be reduced as a matter of policy. Of course, there is no secret that some members of the Economic Council whose views have been given wide publicity take a very, and in our view, an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the situation. Admittedly we are living to some extent "on our hump" (the credit surplus of our balance of payments fell last year from £140 millions to about £40 millions), but if it cannot be used in an emergency like the present, what is our "hump" for?

* * *

Meanwhile, rumour is crediting the Cabinet with the intention of imposing a "wheat quota." Fifteen per cent. of all flour used (it is alleged) is to be made from

home-grown wheat. Here is a proposal which the left-wing Socialist and the old-fashioned Free Trader can wholeheartedly unite in condemning. Mr. E. F. Wise, discussing it at the I.L.P. Conference, declared it to be worse than useless, while the "orthodox" economist views it with abhorrence as necessarily involving an uneconomic subsidy. A quota is certainly not workable without a guaranteed price for home-grown wheat, and the guaranteed price would need to be so large—30s. a quarter has been mentioned—as to transfer large sums from the pockets of the general taxpayer into those of the farmers (and landlords). We think it most unlikely that the present Cabinet is, in fact, considering this proposal seriously.

* * *

Affairs have not gone well in Europe this week if we judge them, as we must, by their repercussions on the coming Disarmament Conference. The Austro-German Customs Union project, desirable as it is in itself, has already had the effect we feared and provided the French with new arguments against any genuine measure of all-round disarmament. Mr. Henderson has been treated to a sample of this kind of talk from M. Briand, while French nationalist circles have worked themselves into a veritable hysteria about the British Government's invitation to Herren Brüning and Curtius to pay a visit to Chequers. This invitation originally formed part of Mr. Henderson's disarmament tactics; for, having secured an amelioration of Franco-Italian relations, he hoped to carry off a similar success in regard to Franco-German relations. Of course, in a reasonable world the effect of the Austro-German bombshell would be to make Paris realise that Security can only be obtained in the long run by disarmament, not by the dangerous attempt to keep Germany in chains. But this is not a reasonable world.

* * *

To add to Mr. Henderson's troubles, a serious hitch has also occurred in the drafting of the Franco-Italian naval agreement. The version in the French press is that the agreement would leave France, in 1936, with an inadequate margin of superiority over Italy in new ships, and that she has accordingly demanded an increase in the permitted programme of replacement. The Italians say that the French are claiming to replace ships which Italy has never admitted as replaceable. From this it would seem that the French are reviving the claim which they put forward in London, that their present building programme is not to be considered as a replacement of the obsolete cruisers which they have persisted in retaining on their Navy List, and that these vessels are, therefore, replaceable by additional new construction. The *Daily Telegraph* gives an even more disturbing version of the French demands. It states that France insists on limiting her construction only until 1935; so that, if the Naval Conference in that year proved unsatisfactory to her, she would be free to build in 1935 and 1936 without limit, while the original signatories to the London Treaty would be bound by its terms until the end of 1936.

* * *

Whatever the precise details of the French claim may be, it is clear that the sole cause of the hitch in the work of the Drafting Committee is the desire of France to vary in her favour the terms of a bargain only just concluded. This would be bad enough if France and Italy alone were concerned; it is made much worse by its possible reactions on the programmes of Great Britain, the United States and Japan, any one of whom may consider itself entitled and compelled to take advantage of the escalator clause in the London Treaty. The prospects for next year's Disarmament Conference will look black unless France can learn that a naval compromise does not mean only concessions to her insatiable thirst for submarines. Meanwhile, a new difficulty is foreshadowed by the passionate attachment of Admiral Pratt, the American Chief of Naval Operations, to the 35,000 ton capital ship, as indicated in a recent interview. The cost of these ships is so huge that there is something to be said for retention of the 35,000 ton limit as tending to discourage replacement and a competition in new types; but Great Britain, France and Italy are now all committed to a policy of reducing the size of units, and great care will be needed to avert the danger of a new Anglo-American controversy.

* * *

After rising to a high crescendo of abuse, the dissensions in the Hitler Party in Berlin have temporarily subsided. Captain Stennes, the disgruntled leader of the Storm-Detachments, has been unable to secure the necessary financial support for the formation of his proposed new party, and in the absence of considerable financial resources he is unlikely to attract any followers. For the moment, therefore, Herr Hitler has triumphed over his difficulties. But his prestige has suffered in the process, and in the towns, at any rate, his stock has declined. The collapse of the Nazi Government in Thuringia has done even greater damage to his prospects. Nevertheless, these indications of failure on Herr Hitler's part should not be regarded as a proof of the pending failure of German Nazi-ism. They merely reveal the fact that Herr Hitler is a somewhat colourless personality and that German Fascism still awaits its Mussolini. Herr Hitler's initial successes were due to the fact that he identified himself with a cause which appealed and still appeals to the youth of Germany. The man himself may be found wanting, but the cause remains, and will remain as long as allied policy fosters German Nationalism.

* * *

The statistics published in a recent issue of the *Pravda* regarding the progress of the Five-Year Plan make remarkable reading. In a long list of industrial achievement the Bolsheviks boast that this year over five hundred new factories are being brought into operation. They also claim that the oil industry has completed its five-year plan and that it has now started on a second plan. They admit certain failures and shortcomings in the coal industry and in transport. On the whole, while allowing for statistical optimism, the figures reveal a great advance in production. As compared with 1913, the output of oil has increased threefold, the steel output has doubled, electric power has more than doubled, coal production has risen from twenty-nine million tons to eighty-three million tons. The greater part of this increase has been obtained

during the past eighteen months. Triumphant claims are also put forward on behalf of the communal farms and the Soviet agricultural estates. In 1927, 85 per cent. of the grain production came from the poor peasants, 18 per cent. from the kulaks, and only 2 per cent. from the communal and State farms. This year it is estimated that 50.7 per cent. of the grain produced will come from the communal farms, 46.8 per cent. from the poor peasants, and only 2.5 per cent. from the kulaks. Even if allowance is made for propagandist exaggeration, the figures are impressive. It is useless to talk about the failure of the Five-Year Plan. It may not be completed in five, or even twenty-five years, but in the sense that it is converting Russia from a backward agricultural country into a modern industrial country with unprecedented rapidity there is no doubt about its success.

* * *

The resignation of the Mironescu Cabinet in Rumania has caused little surprise. Rumania has been among the worst sufferers from the world depression, and no single party in the State has been strong enough to support the burden of responsibility during this period of economic stress. For some time King Carol has been endeavouring to form a national Government supported by all parties, and M. Mironescu, who succeeded M. Maniu last year, has never been regarded as anything more than a stop-gap. The *deus ex machina*, who is to restore Rumania's fortunes, is, as usual, the youthful and brilliant M. Titulescu, who has just been summoned from London to Bucharest in order to put himself at the head of the proposed Cabinet of Concentration. Should M. Titulescu fail to obtain the necessary support from the National Peasants Party, who command seventy per cent. of the total Parliamentary vote, the King is credited with the intention of dissolving Parliament and of establishing, with the aid of M. Titulescu, a form of personal government similar to the existing regime in Jugoslavia. Such a course may or may not be necessary. Of one thing we may be certain. M. Titulescu is a shrewd and experienced lawyer. He will not lend himself to any unconstitutional measure without grave reflection.

* * *

It was an ironic thing that many eminent citizens of Chicago, the city which expects to keep its centenary in 1933, excused Big Bill Thompson on the grounds that he was a genuine "pioneer." Thompson is about as much of a pioneer as Tom Mix; his only claim to be old-fashioned rests on his vocabulary and on his preference for the ways of the circus to the devices of the movie. Anyway, Chicago, in an election where more votes were polled than in any previous contest for the Mayoralty, has rejected Big Bill, whose main line of defence was borrowed from Hearst's assertion that there were twenty-five American cities with a worse crime record than Chicago's. It must be a great spiritual consolation to a man who is "taken for a ride" by Lake Michigan to know that somewhere else at that time two citizens are being bumped off. It is too early to say whether the election of Antony Cermak means a reform administration in Chicago. The more radical reform candidates were all rejected; all that we know of Mr. Cermak is that he is an immigrant and a millionaire. It is also rumoured that he was supported by big business. A good test of his sincerity will be if he is willing to overstep the party divisions, and ask for the assistance of Judge Lyle, hitherto Thompson's most formidable opponent. What is wanted in Chicago is not Republican or Democrat, but an anti-criminal league.

* * *

An uneasy peace broods over the coal-mining industry. A temporary agreement has been reached in Lancashire, where the "spreadover" of hours has been abandoned in favour of a new arrangement, whereunder the men will work, for their present wages, a little longer each week. Meanwhile, in Scotland and North Wales the "spreadover" is still being worked, in defiance of the Coal Mines Act, 1930, but with the tacit connivance of the Government. All the agreements, however, expire in less than three months' time, when the Coal Mines Act, 1926, will automatically lapse; if legislation is not passed before then the industry must revert automatically to the seven-hours day. Mr. Shinwell is working hard, we believe, to avert the calamity that would then ensue. To a large extent, he pins his faith to international regulation of hours, and perhaps of markets. But agreements to that effect take time to negotiate, and the inexorable approach of a crisis in our own coalfields means that other alternatives must be explored.

* * *

We should like to see wide publicity given to the Conservative programme which Captain Cazalet outlines in the *Times*. It is a scientific blend of the reactionary and the fatuous—a sort of stockbroker's Utopia—and a widespread realisation of what "young Conservatism" stands for would do a great deal of good. Here are the leading ingredients of the nostrum recommended. (1) A "general and immediate tariff" for revenue purposes, to bring in from £30 to £40 millions. This by itself would be a feasible proposition. But it is to be accompanied (2) by "safeguarding or protective duties" and (3) by Empire preferences —which, of course, would between them reduce the yield from the revenue tariff to negligible proportions. Meanwhile (4) "the axe is to be applied to both the central and local authorities"; (5) direct taxation is to be reduced (*i.e.*, the worker is to bear a much increased share of a greatly diminished burden); while (6) there is to be a "complete and thorough change" in the administration of the "dole." The wage-earner who would vote for such a programme as this would deserve to live permanently on the dole, since he would obviously lack the intelligence to do a job.

* * *

There are only a few weeks to go if the Foundling site is to be saved. Lord Rothermere's generous contribution of £50,000 has been supplemented by many sums coming from people in all parts of the country who write to say that to turn the 10,000 children, who have been playing on this site during the last two years, back on to the streets would be a disgrace, not only to London but to England. But a very large sum of money is still wanted and it is a welcome sign that the Local Authorities, from whose schools these children come, have begun to make a move. Holborn Council has passed a resolution urging the L.C.C. to take action, and if the other authorities follow suit, the L.C.C., which is not unsympathetic but which moves slowly, may yet move in time. But there is not much time before April 30th, and the committee, which is organising the appeal at 93, Guilford Street, W.C.1, need every bit of help that any of us can give them.

WAR AND THE NEXT GENERATION

MR. ANGUS ROBERTS was perfectly right when he said in his presidential address to the National Union of Teachers that the danger of war still lies in its glamour—in " the indefinite form of admiration " which still clings to it. He was right, too, in saying that the problem of peace is a problem of education. For modern war is the product of ignorance and idealism, not of far-sighted wickedness. There was a time when kings could make war with mercenaries and pressed troops; in democratic countries war is only possible on a basis of overwhelming popular approval. That approval has been won in the past because war has been presented as an honourable adventure; because young men, who never fail to respond to the call of danger with honour, have been brought up to believe that patriotism is the supreme duty; because each generation has been educated in so narrow a groove that it has been prepared to believe every story of the diabolism of the enemy and to accept as final the necessity of fighting for national preservation, for civilisation, for a just and lasting peace, and for all the other stock phrases which serve, ironically enough, to create enthusiasm on each side in each war.

The fact that tens of thousands of men in the last war did believe in the value and necessity of killing and dying for their opposing countries made their sacrifice noble. We rightly honour them because they obeyed what they had been taught to regard as the highest obligation. But that need not prevent us from bringing up a new generation to recognise that martial patriotism is an out-of-date virtue; from repeating what the survivors of the battlefields have been telling us during the last few years—that to-day international war is civil war and that to take part in another war will be to share not in an honourable adventure, but in something that is individually shameful as well as socially suicidal.

It becomes individually shameful just as soon as we have grown out of the national stage of consciousness; just as soon as we have learnt that civilisation does not consist of one's own country and some other countries which may at any moment threaten it and need us to teach them a lesson, but of a community of nations which live or die together. We can scarcely expect boys educated in public schools to grow up as internationalists. The O.T.C. is virtually compulsory in almost all of them—the Government cracked a good joke when it refused a subsidy to cadet corps which have no military value and continued to grant it to O.T.C.s which are a conscious part of armament preparation. More important, in most of these schools the supreme value and final claims of one's own country are the assumptions of every lesson and every official activity. We are far from meaning that the boys grow up as militarists; they are usually sick of the whole paraphernalia. But that is not enough. The need is for a generation whose outlook is international, and an occasional half-hour's instruction about the League of Nations is no antidote for a pervasive and perpetual atmosphere of nationalism.

Perhaps the situation in the schools where the members of the National Union of Teachers are in control is more encouraging. Certainly if modern international history is taught objectively, if there is the notion that foreign countries contain persons much like ourselves, if the picture of the world as an organic whole is the everyday background, then the kind of propaganda which made the last war possible will fall flat when the next is threatened. The N.U.T. certainly has a great opportunity and Mr. Roberts made a sound point when he said that teachers would not eradicate the willingness to fight by merely describing the horrors of war. The response of youth is apt to be that they can bear what their fathers bore. The greater the physical horror the greater the call upon growing strength and untried courage. Knowledge and an international morality are the only safeguards.

No doubt we still need what William James called a " moral equivalent for war." But in this respect we are surely in a stronger position than our forefathers. In the days when war meant hand-to-hand fighting there was really something splendid about it. Even in the last war there were opportunities for chivalry; there was a genuine call for comradeship in arms. But we have heard complaints from regular soldiers that warfare nowadays is not war at all—" not war," they put it, " but bloody murder." They seemed to feel that there was no difficulty in finding a moral equivalent (or even a moral improvement) for the job of firing shells in the hope that they would destroy an equally well-intentioned group of men ten miles away or of dropping bombs on helpless civilians in industrial cities.

If war had become a scientific but indiscriminate slaughter involving civilians as well as armed men in 1918, what of the next war? To appreciate what it would mean one needs to read a dispassionate and technical book, such as Major Lefebure's *Scientific Disarmament*. Major Lefebure is an expert; his main point is that disarmament by international agreement is not impossible if we exercise control at the right point in the complex production of each form of armament. Incidentally, he explains what kind of results we may expect from the secret researches which are being conducted in each country into new methods of killing. Lewisite, a poison gas which so burns its victims that they become scarcely recognisable, and another gas which first causes intense pain in the head and chest, a pain which is followed by such acute mental misery that it sometimes drives men to suicide—these came into use before the end of the last war. But men recover from doses of these gases, just as they often do from mustard gas and phosgene, and we may apparently expect more effective substitutes in the next war. It seems, too, that there is a good prospect of developing other forms of poison. Poisons can be administered to a population in a variety of ways—we are past the stage of poisoned arrows, though the principle is the same—and there is some discussion about the best means of spreading various forms of plague, so that fighting may be unnecessary for those who first succeed in reaching the water-supply.

Where is the glamour, the high call of adventure in war of this kind? If it should get about—and the National Union of Teachers are in a good strategical position—that war means not fighting in any sense that

boys understand, but scientific ways of shooting, burning and poisoning people of their own kind in large numbers, is there anything chimerical in Mr. Roberts' notion of making the individual act of fighting seem a shameful thing? We have written in all sincerity on our war memorials up and down the country: "*dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*" Perhaps we shall do so again. But if we add "to kill for your country," which is, after all, what a soldier is asked to do—will that too seem a sweet and honourable thing in a war of the kind for which all nations even now are preparing?

PRISON FOR THE POOR

NO system of jurisprudence yields so deep a reverence for the sanctity of personal liberty as is found in our Courts of Justice. Equally deep-rooted in our law is its regard for the security of property. But where claims arising out of both come into conflict, the position is neither clear nor satisfactory. Indeed, in the domain of criminal law, personal or individual liberty was not raised to the same plane as rights of property till the twentieth century. Judicial decisions which involved human life no less than personal liberty could not as of right be carried for revision to an appellate court until Lord Loreburn established the Court of Criminal Appeal in 1907, whereas, on the other hand, an issue involving rights of property could always have been carried to the House of Lords. The attempt to subordinate rights of property to the higher claims of liberty of the person, which took place in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was far from successful. Those monthly numbers of *Pickwick* in which the genius of Charles Dickens aroused the public conscience to the iniquities of imprisonment for debt appeared towards the end of 1837. Thirty years later, in 1868, the abolition of imprisonment for debt was carried through both Houses of Parliament. In the terms of its title the Debtors Act of 1869 is described as an act for the abolition of imprisonment for debt and for the punishment of fraudulent debtors. Yet in the year 1929, after an interval of sixty years, no less than 3,484 debtors, nearly all of them humble wage earners, were committed to prison from the county courts alone for non-payment of debt.

How comes it about that these men were committed to prison for debt in the teeth, apparently, of the expressed intention of Parliament? For, under our constitutional system of government, Parliament is the supreme authority for declaring what the law shall be, just as the House of Lords in its judicial capacity is the supreme authority for deciding what it is that the law says. The function of our judges, whether in the High Court or the County Court, is to interpret and apply the law, not to enact it. The true answer to the question is one which explains why so much of our modern legislation results in disillusionment or disappointment. Parliament expressed its intention in such language that the legal profession had no difficulty in driving a coach and four through it. Not one of the M.P.s who voted for the Debtors Act in 1868 perceived the potential meaning of the harmless looking provisoes and exceptions which have since circumvented the object of the Act so far as it aimed at the abolition of imprisonment for debt. In section IV. it is declared in the most explicit terms that no person shall be arrested or imprisoned for debt. Provision had, however, to be made for cases of flagrant dishonesty (e.g., a trustee refusing to hand over trust funds), and so six exceptions were attached and set out in the section. It is the last, the sixth exception, which has done the mischief. It was framed in language so harmless in appearance that the M.P.s who voted for it failed to perceive the insidious germ which has since eaten up the substance of the statute. It ran in these words: "(6) Default in payment of sums in respect of the payment of which orders are in this Act authorised to be made." It was followed by this exception in section V.: "A person who makes default in payment of any debt or instalment of any debt or instalment due from him in pursuance of any order or judgment."

None of our legislators in 1868 could see in this legalist phraseology any indication that it would work out as it has done, nor how, sixty years after the enactment, thousands of poor workmen would still be imprisoned for debt. Possibly they were misled or confused by the alleged protection of the words "restrictions to the jurisdiction" set out in section V. These require the judgment creditor to prove to the satisfaction of the county court judge that the debtor against whom a committal order is sought "has" or "had" the means of paying, and "has" or "had" refused or neglected to pay. Be it observed that the word "dishonestly" or "fraudulently" or "wilfully" does not appear in these operative words of the section, notwithstanding that the word "fraudulent" appears in the title of the statute. (Eminent judges like Jessel and Halsbury and Vaughan Williams have declared in reported cases that the statute was never intended to apply to any debtors save those who are fraudulent or dishonest, and that the punishment is for contumacious conduct amounting to contempt of court.) Speaking generally, judgment creditors, as a class, act always on the assumption that neither fraud nor dishonesty matters.

Four years after the Debtors Act was passed in 1869 there came about a development of our law which has contributed no little to this curious frustration of the Legislature's attempt to abolish imprisonment for debt. This was the Judicature Act of 1873, which made debts assignable by written notice to the debtor. At common law contracts were not assignable without the consent of both contracting parties, and that epoch-marking statute (which was supposed to bring about the fusion of law and equity) aimed no doubt at dispensing with the necessity of compelling an assignee in equity to sue in the name of the assignor. But, as usual, the legislative innovation led indirectly to a result never contemplated by those who drafted or voted for the change. This was the creation of a novel occupation, namely, the profession of small debt collectors.

In our poverty-stricken areas the small debt collector is now almost as familiar an institution as the money-lender. For many years firms of *soi disant* accountants have carried on a thriving business all over the country by collecting small debts from indigent working class families, over whom the threat to imprison the bread winner is held *in terrorem*. The increasing bitterness of the social discontent in our industrial areas is rooted in various causes, but one cause springs in no small measure from the pressure of the debt collector, exerted as it is with the grim shadow of the criminal gaol behind it. For example, a grocer or bootmaker in a mining village finds his ledger crowded with small debts that he cannot collect from his collier customers owing to unemployment. So long as the cloud of industrial depression remains unbroken he looks upon these accounts as bad debts, and when the professional debt collector comes along and offers, in cash, say, ten per cent. of the total amount, the small shopkeeper is glad to make the best of a bad job, and he executes an assignment of the debts accordingly. Before long the files of the nearest county court registry become almost clogged with the pile of judgment summonses which the debt collector issues against the various debtors. It is notorious that a disproportionate

amount of the time of our overworked county court judges is taken up in dealing with committal orders. Public opinion prides itself on having humanised our criminal law and on the fact that the taint of the prison is now rarely branded on the first offender against our criminal code. Yet every year thousands of decent and respectable workmen, who are no more criminals than the members of the Carlton Club, are thrust into gaol for debt, and emerge therefrom with the prison taint upon them, although public opinion, as expressed through Parliament, declared as far back as sixty years ago that such things should not be.

ECONOMIC NOTES ON FREE TRADE

III.—THE REACTION OF IMPORTS ON EXPORTS.

THE course of the present controversy seems to indicate that a large proportion of Free Traders hold their faith, not as the outcome of a nice balancing of advantages against disadvantages, but believing it to be an obvious inference from a simple truth. If you keep out an import, then "since imports and exports pay for one another" it follows mathematically—so it is believed—that you will lose an export after an interval of time so short as not to matter. This doctrine has even been supported by high authority. It has appeared, in one form or another, in several communications to THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION; Professor Robbins, though he would not, I imagine, go the whole hog, has lent colour to it in an article published in *Economica* (February, 1931, pp. 54, 55) where, under the designation of "the *pons asinorum* of international trade theory" he employs an argument against a tariff as a means of increasing employment which would apply equally against a reduction of wages or an increase of efficiency; and Sir William Beveridge, in the *Times* newspaper, has produced the doctrine in its full purity, asserting that it makes no difference to employment in this country whether I buy an American car or a British car, or whether our costs of manufacturing iron and steel are reduced to a competitive basis with foreign costs. No, not quite in its full purity! For Sir William's credulity falters at a critical point; whilst he believes that a reduction in our imports would cause a reduction in our exports, he does *not* believe that an increase in our imports would cause an increase in our exports.

Now, if all this were true—if a reduction of imports causes almost at once a more or less equal reduction of exports—obviously a tariff (and many other things) would be completely futile for the purposes of augmenting employment or of increasing the balance of trade in our favour. But, of course, it is not true! To believe it is to fly in the face of common sense and of experience, and cannot be supported by argument. It would only be true in a hypothetical economic system possessing such an inherent capacity for stable equilibrium, that not only were both the initial and the final positions in equilibrium, but the elasticity of the system was such that any disturbance was responded to so immediately that the system was incapable of ever departing appreciably from equilibrium. At any rate, I am sure that the assumptions required for the conclusion are far remote from contemporary facts; and in the proof along these lines, that a tariff cannot diminish unemployment, one of the inappropriate assumptions which has tacitly slipped in is, I suggest, that there is no unemployment to diminish! Nor does it help to make the qualification that exports, though not necessarily diminished at once, will be diminished sooner or later. The ultimate effect of keeping out particular imports may be, sooner or later, to increase other imports.

On the contrary, whilst the position of every element in the economic system is, in a sense, dependent on that of every other, there is not, according to my view of the subject, any direct and simple relationship between the volume of exports and the volume of imports. A change in imports, due to the interposition of a new factor such as a tariff, sets up a series of complex reactions on the economic body, which are likely, indeed, before they have completely worked themselves out, to have *some* effect on almost every factor in the situation. But the nature of this effect depends profoundly (amongst other things) *upon whether the initial position was one of equilibrium.* Let me indicate briefly, by an example, the sort of considerations of which one has to take account. If our imports are reduced by a tariff or in some other way, in the first instance the Bank of England has a choice between importing more gold or lowering the bank rate. In so far as it imports more gold, the countries losing the gold may or may not contract their domestic credit. In so far as it lowers its bank rate, this may be expected to cause us immediately to lend more abroad (or to borrow less) and to expand credit at home. The expansion of credit at home may be expected to cause us both to import more and to increase our own output. How far an increase in our output will involve an increase in the price of this output, will depend upon whether we have a surplus capacity for production and upon how far this surplus capacity can be brought into use at approximately the same money-rate of remuneration per unit of efficiency as the productive plant and labour already in use. In so far, however, as the surplus capacity can only be brought into employment at the expense of an increased cost per unit, this will apply equally to many other remedies for unemployment, and will not be a peculiarity of the case, where the initial impulse comes from a tariff. What the net effect of all this will be on the value of our exports, as compared with the effect of alternative remedies for unemployment, cannot be answered merely on *a priori* considerations, but must be determined by applying a sound theoretical apparatus to a knowledge of many current facts, and an estimation by the practical judgment of the probabilities suggested by this application. I can imagine cases where the final result would be actually to *increase* our exports and other cases where I should expect exports to be decreased. In any case, it could only be by an improbable and extraordinary coincidence that the net effect on the value of our exports would be *equal* to the change in the value of our imports. In the present instance, I believe that there is an opportunity for a tariff to produce a net favourable effect on employment; firstly, because the Bank of England is having to exert pressure by maintaining a rate of discount artificially, indeed unprecedentedly, high relatively to the rates in France and the United States, and has been more or less in this position for a considerable time past, in order to prevent us from lending too much abroad, so that a relaxation of the pressure on the foreign exchanges might be expected to increase forthwith our foreign lending; and secondly, because we have a large surplus capacity of men and plant, so that a substantial increase of output for use at home might be possible without the reaction on the price of our exports which might be expected if we had no surplus capacity.

Perhaps controversy with one's friends and colleagues is an essentially barren thing. But I come to the end of my attempt to deal with the controversy which I have provoked in the pages of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION with an unusually arid flavour in my mouth. There is a great deal to be said on both sides about this tariff question. It is a difficult decision. But in this discussion we have not been reaching more than the fringe of what are for me the real

problems. As Professor Bellerby pointed out in his letter last week, my critics have not taken any notice of, or shown the slightest interest in, the analysis of our present state, which occupied most of my original article and led up to my tariff proposal in the last paragraph. Is it the fault of the *odium theologicum* attaching to Free Trade? Is it that Economics is a queer subject or in a queer state? Whatever may be the reason, new paths of thought have no appeal to the fundamentalists of Free Trade. They have been forcing me to chew over again a lot of stale mutton, dragging me along a route I have known all about as long as I have known anything, which cannot, as I have discovered by many attempts, lead one to a solution of our present difficulties—a peregrination of the catacombs with a guttering candle.

J. M. KEYNES.

SOME GREAT WAVE OF COMMON SENSE

"MAYBE," observes Mr. H. G. Wells in the latest of his prophetical speculations, "some great wave of common sense will sweep over the world before our grandchildren's time." I forget—indeed, I never knew for certain—how old the human race is, but at a guess I should say that we have been waiting for that great wave of common sense some tens of thousands of years, and we have not yet reached a point at which we can be sure that an ordinary human being will behave with common sense even in his own family and in his personal relationships. How, then, can we expect this ineffectual creature to be miraculously inspired with common sense as a citizen of his country and as a citizen of the world?

One of the chief difficulties in the way of the triumph of common sense has always been that human beings have been totally unable to agree either as to what common sense is or as to how a common sense world would behave. The mystic believes that it is common sense to despise many pleasures that common sense urges the materialist to enjoy. Common sense bids one man seek the Kingdom of God and another man seek a fortune. In the political sphere it has always been common sense that led the strong nation to conquer the weak, and common sense has been equally at work in the weak nation, inciting it at the earliest possible moment to resist. I have never heard of a political crisis in which common sense did not inspire the opposing sides to directly opposite ends. Common sense maintained the English conquest of Ireland; common sense founded the Irish Free State. Common sense calls with an equally persuasive voice for Free Trade and Protection; at least, there are enough common sense arguments on each side to make an ordinary ignorant person like myself an easy convert to either creed for five minutes at a time. On the question of war, again, the appeal of the militarist is to common sense, and the appeal of the pacifist is to—common sense. I am myself by nature a devotee of common sense, and one result of this was that during the late war I used at breakfast to see the common sense of fighting to a finish, at lunch the common sense of an arranged peace, and at dinner the common sense of the conscientious objector. I do not mean to say that I ever forgot my moral and political prejudices so far that my very opinions wobbled, but I could not help feeling that, whoever was talking to me and whatever he was saying, he was at least saying something that sounded uncommonly like common sense. And to-day, similarly, I hear so much common sense being talked around me on every question that I have to fall back on sheer personal prejudice and bigotry in order to keep my balance. Have you ever listened to the common sense case for Fascism? It is incontrovertible. Or to the common sense case for Bolshevism? It is as plain as a pikestaff, whatever that may be. Or to the common sense case for a common sense kind of English politics that is neither Fascist nor Bolshevist? It is more convincing than Euclid. There is, it seems to me, such a superabundance of common sense in the world that no cause, however fantastic, is likely ever to be entirely denied of its support. If you want to hear common sense at its purest you will do well to listen to a man with a bee in his bonnet—a bimetallist, or a free lover, or a man who devotes his life to combating the national menace of dart throwing and cake-weight-guessing competitions. Talk about a wave of common sense. Why, there is a whirlpool of common sense already in being that threatens to suck down civilisation!

It may be objected that what I look on as common sense is not common sense at all—that real common sense is not a talent for giving good reasons for doing what is fundamentally unreasonable, but is a kind of wisdom, extremely rare and still more indefinable, which at the same time sees what is best and is willing to give it a twist to bring it into line with what is most practicable. Common sense, in this sense of the phrase, is only another word for compromise. I do not deny the existence of this kind of common sense, but I notice that it usually appears only after two violently opposing waves of common sense have exhausted themselves. Thus, after a strike, when the employers have half ruined their businesses and the workers have half ruined their homes, the settlement between the two exhausted sides is usually described as a victory for common sense. In point of fact it frequently is; but if common sense is a natural characteristic of human beings how does it come about that the common common sense of both sides scarcely ever appears till the individual common sense of each has proved ineffectual? So far as we can gather from the historians every strike and every war began with at least one-sided lunacy, yet most of them ended in common sense. Yet, if common sense were really common, one would expect it to raise its clear and reasonable voice at the beginning of the conflict rather than at the end of it. Common sense, as we see it in history, is something that human beings try when they despair of anything else. It is said by historians that common sense could have achieved everything for which the American Civil War was fought and could have done so without the loss of a single life. Yet the Americans, each side incited by a kind of common sense, preferred to fight till out of the two kinds of common sense a new kind of common sense was born. That is what common sense really means—the common sense of the result—the common sense that suddenly appears under the compulsion of facts.

Even so, however, there is no need to be pessimistic about nature. Without being excessively rose-coloured in our view of history, I think a good historian might be able to trace through the procession of events a slow but certain growth of the kind of common sense that anticipates rather than follows disaster. There is no doubt that in our own time many problems which in earlier centuries would have been solved by bloodshed followed by common sense have been solved by anticipatory common sense without bloodshed. It would have been absurd to take too seriously the threat of the chivalrous son of an English Peer that blood would flow under London Bridge before the veto of the House of Lords was abolished. At the same time, the fact remains that, at the time of crisis, the House of Lords recognised the compulsion of events in advance, and did not await it, as Lord Willoughby de Broke wished, till it had been made

clear by force. On the whole, I think there is no better definition of common sense at its best than "an anticipatory recognition of necessity." The romantic prefer not to recognise necessity until after a tussle. Not only that, but they are incapable of recognising it till they have been worsted. And even then, they explain their defeat away in an extraordinary common-sense fashion. It is a depressing thought that the future of common sense may depend on the extirpation of the romantic imagination in man.

It is clear, however, that Mr. Wells thinks of common sense, not as a mere anticipatory recognition of necessity, but as a comprehension of what would happen in an entirely reasonable world. That, of course, is the point at which opposing waves of common sense begin to clash angrily with each other. My own common sense, for example, tells me that the human race can now produce so much wealth that there is enough food, clothing and shelter for everybody, and that we should share it equally; and, at the same time, my common sense tells me that human beings are such fools, so afflicted with envy and cruelty as well as being endowed with heroism and affection, that the transition stage to universal equality may possibly lead to the most odious persecution of much that makes life worth living—freedom of the mind, freedom of the arts, freedom of conduct. I hate the thought of those perfect republics designed by pedants—I do not mean Mr. Wells—which would regulate our thoughts, our reading, and even our laughter. Yet, in a purely rational state, the pedants will always get the upper hand. Even Plato, the wisest man who ever discussed the ideal State, foreshadowed a world which makes most men feel that Hampstead, as it is to-day, is preferable.

At the same time, it is too early to despair of a rational solution of the social and economic problems of mankind. After all, it is only a few thousand years since man, in a moment of supreme illumination discovered that two and two make four, and we cannot expect such gigantic discoveries of the obvious to come in regiments. Is it not reasonable to believe, however, that the race that once discovered that two and two make four and that held on to this piece of common sense with bulldog tenacity through centuries of communal madness will one day perceive the obvious facts about the wealth of the world and its distribution? One obvious fact is that, if anyone were given the power with the touch of a wand to bring a new continent into existence with an ideal form of society, he would not take as his model the civilised world of to-day. Common sense tells us that the civilised world of to-day has won such a victory over the forces of Nature that the next step should be to divide the spoils. Common sense tells us that it is only our egotism, personal, social and national, that prevents this division, for by a strange paradox it is egotism above all things that blinds men to their self-interest. On the other hand, common sense tells us that human beings are like that, and that it is highly improbable that they will suddenly be transformed into rational beings. They prefer the madness of egotism to the tame wisdom of self-interest. They would be unhappy in a world in which there were no inequalities to give them the possibility of triumph, and they cherish hostility as a luxury. One thing emerges clearly from the chaos of history: human beings like disliking each other. It is impossible on any other ground to explain the long succession of wars and threats of war that have crowded the histories with dates since the birth of Christianity. If Europeans had been reasonable they could have achieved by reason more than they achieved by war, but they have never been reasonable for more than a breathing-space, which was merely a preparation for further unreasonableness. Man is not even reasonable enough to see how unreasonable he is. We see how unreasonable our grandfathers were, but that is as far as our reasonableness goes. Hence, it is useless to expect a great wave of common sense to appear as if by magic and sweep over the world, enriching it for ever. Common sense tells us that, until common sense has been given a religious or semi-religious force, there is not the slightest chance of its getting a firm hold on the minds of human beings. Human beings love only what touches their imaginations: that is why they enjoy hostilities. If they ever come to have common sense, it will be because it has become imaginative—as imaginative, say, as patriotism. In other words, it will have to be the kind of common sense that common-sense men deplore as moonshine.

Y. Y.

R 101

THE Court of Inquiry has found unanimously* that R101 was driven to earth at Beauvais through a sudden deflation of one or more forward gas-bags after a steady loss of gas throughout her flight. It is held that she encountered a downward gust which tore some portion of her envelope and so opened a large hole in a neighbouring gas-bag, and that this happened immediately after the changing of the watch, before the new coxswain had time to get the "feel" of the ship, which was then flying about 1,000 feet above the ground in a wind of 40-50 miles per hour. This is no more than the most probable explanation of the disaster, arrived at, after a process of elimination, by wringing the last ounce—and perhaps a bit more—from the meagre evidence of survivors and the opinion of airship experts, and buttressed by an important series of mathematical reconstructions of the event. No other explanation will cover the sudden change from confidence to catastrophe, nor the firm evidence that there was no failure either of structure or of elevator control before the fire. It is bootless to cavil at this or that weak point in an investigation which has been conducted with conspicuous ability and care. So far as the explicit event is concerned, the Court's finding is probably the last word on the subject. Granted its validity, it is extremely significant in fixing attention on envelope and gas-bag construction, the behaviour of which is much less susceptible to preliminary estimate than is the stress of the rigid parts of the structure. It is just those matters which, as the evidence shows, were causing most anxiety in the final stages of the preparation, which are now found to have wrecked the airship.

The Court had, however, a second duty, and that was to examine the circumstances which led to R101 being launched for India on October 4th, 1930. Their approach to this question is again wholly admirable. The Report contains a most lucid history of the design and construction of R101, from the authorisation of the airship progamme in 1924 down to the last hectic weeks of September, 1930. But having assembled a series of facts which are in effect nothing less than a tract on the theme that science and politics make tragic bedfellows, the Court hesitates to point the plain moral. A concluding paragraph on the atmosphere in which the final preparations were made is clearly intended to exonerate everyone from blame. This is perfectly just. No one in authority acted in anything but perfect good faith. The villain of the piece was an organisation in which the atmosphere of a scientific experiment is apt at any moment to be perturbed by the uncertain winds of political expediency. The question: what next? is extraordinarily diffi-

**Report of the R 101 Inquiry.* Cmd. 3825. Stationery Office. 2s. 6d.

cult. It is impossible to answer unless this fact is unflinchingly recognised.

The airship programme of 1924 was conceived in a strictly scientific spirit. It aimed to amass experience, in ships of novel construction, which would ultimately enable those ships, or others built on the experience gained, to make long-range scheduled flights in all weathers. Experience, not adventure, was the watchword. The initial stages of the enterprise went according to plan; progress was slow but very sure. The first hitch occurred when the structure of R101 proved 25 tons too heavy. From that moment she was, in the best opinion, definitely unsuitable for inaugurating an airship service to India. Those who argue that we have made railway trains and motor cars work, and that therefore we can, by working hard enough, "conquer the airship," should notice the dilemma which then faced her constructors. It was impossible to scrap a basket in which so many eggs had been placed. The only course was to proceed with such alterations as were feasible. It was decided to increase the disposable load to the bare minimum for an Indian flight (a) by inserting an extra bay and (b) by modifying the gas-bag wiring so as to increase the capacity. Of these, the latter at least, with its risk of serious gas-bag chafing against the hull, was very debatable.

The second crisis occurred on the decision to make a demonstration to the Imperial Conference. To argue, as the Report does, that the final word lay throughout with the technical officers is to misconceive a very common psychological situation. Everyone knows what happens when the head of an organisation—particularly if he be of a sanguine and forceful personality—says to his officers: "I don't want to hurry your plans, but——." In scientific work it is remarkable how the mere introduction of a date to work to changes the atmosphere and tempo of an experiment, with its enevitable effect on the workers' judgment. To put a thing to the test turns out to be remarkably different from testing it. And so in this case R101, which began as an experiment, was quickened into an adventure, and as the summer of 1930 wore on everyone was well on the run. The condition of the enlarged gas-bags after flights in June so alarmed an official of the Inspection Department that he took an unusual course in reporting it, but was overruled by the opinion that careful padding of the girder projection would suffice. All that survived of an elaborate series of flight tests projected by the captain was a sixteen-hour cruise in perfect weather. The aerodynamic consultants were so pressed for time in assessing the effect of the alterations that a permit to fly the only test was obtained by telephone, and the certificate of airworthiness was issued at the last moment, before the aerodynamic report on which it was intended to base it had been written. The weather of October 4th was so uncertain that if R101 had waited to receive the evening forecast it is doubtful if she would have started. The last diary entry of one of the ship's officers runs:

> Everybody is rather keyed up now, as we all feel that the future of airships very largely depends on what sort of a show we put up. There are very many unknown factors, and I feel that that thing called "Luck" will figure rather conspicuously in our flight. Let's hope for good luck and do our best.

That is magnificent, but it is not airship research. If R101 had returned from India to receive the plaudits of the Imperial Conference, the political results might have been most gratifying, but the scientific position would not have been notably advanced. One flight, however spectacular, does not make a scientist's summer.

The question whether there should now be a resumption of work on airships is not touched upon in the Report, and cannot be fully argued here. But if we are to try again, three precautions at least seem to be necessary. In the first place, helium should be substituted for hydrogen. In the second, the operational height should be much increased above the commonly accepted figure of 1,000-1,500 feet. The dive which wrecked R101 might not have been disastrous if she had had several thousand feet of heavier air to fall through before reaching the earth. And, finally and fundamentally, the stunt, the psychological moment, the theatrical gesture should be resolutely banished from the government of what may yet prove a great and triumphant experiment.

BARRINGTON GATES.

A SIMPLETON LOOKS AT POLITICS

SINCE I feel it is my duty as a citizen to know
What each party really stands for, and why Baldwin ought to go;
Since we're all of us affected by each international mess;
I have tried to understand them—but with very small success.

For example, Mr. Baldwin and Lord Beaverbrook declare
That one creed, one aim, one method, and one policy they share,
Yet they each of them have recently been fighting their ally
With extraordinary venom—and I can't imagine why.

Baron Beaverbrook says Baldwin's a blind leader of the blind;
Mr. Baldwin says Lord Beaverbrook has got a harlot's mind;
Yet Lord Beaverbrook has promised his support to Mr. B.,
And poor Baldwin thanks him kindly—which seems very queer to me.

The economists and statesmen are agreed on this at least,
That by larger fiscal units our prosperity's increased;
Yet as Germany and Austria have ventured to unite,
We are bound to call them villains—but it doesn't seem quite right.

Then the folk who shouted loudest for a Reparations plan
Which meant getting goods for nothing, now assure us, to a man,
We should look upon the Russian as a sanguinary bandit
Just because he sells things cheaply—and I cannot understand it.

When the folk who always bid us "trust the man upon the spot"
Seem so anxious to convince us that Lord Irwin should be shot;
When the stalwarts of retrenchment with such fire and fury fall
Upon armament restriction—well, it puzzles me, that's all.

There's no doubt I'm very stupid; yet I fancy, by the by,
There are quite a lot of people who are just as dense as I,
And I think it might assist us if the statesmen of our days
Would attach some sort of meaning to the battle-cries they raise.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

THE FREEDOM OF THE B.B.C.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have read with much interest Mr. E. M. Forster's article in your issue of April 4th on "The Freedom of the B.B.C." I am sure the talks are listened to by more people than is commonly supposed, and that the majority of those who do listen to them prefer to be treated like grown-up people. Why, when newspapers and periodicals are free to publish articles on controversial subjects, should there be any doubt that broadcasters should have similar freedom?

Intelligent listeners do not wish to listen to strings of platitudes, but to be given mental exercise and enlightenment on the topics of the day, which they discuss among themselves. Obviously, when political and social changes are in progress, it is more useful to hear the views of enthusiastic partisans of both sides of a controversy than to listen to someone who tries to hold the balance and agree on both sides.

It is so important that the B.B.C. should be encouraged to persevere in its present talks policy that I suggest you put this point to your readers in the form of a questionnaire. The result should be interesting.—Yours, etc.,

Norwich. H. KEENE.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Many of your readers will have welcomed with warm appreciation and agreement Mr. E. M. Forster's article on the above subject. He rightly advocates a return to the time when "we were given facts," when "the public were treated like grown-up people capable of hearing both sides of a question." But may I point out that even in that period of the B.B.C.'s greater fairness and fearlessness there was one conspicuous omission? I refer to the great matter of religious belief. The "facts" could not be given, "both sides" could not be shown without including Rationalism and Agnosticism; but when were these given a hearing? We have had sermons and services, we have had samples of many shades of belief, but never, so far as I am aware, any representation of the position and principles of those who stand outside all the creeds, though these include many of the best brains and most cultured minds in the community. Until this ban is removed and impartiality shown in this as in other respects, we shall never have true neutrality or the full ton in each scale which results in the even balance.—Yours, etc.,

The Beach Hotel, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. W. S. GODFREY.

THE CUSTOMS UNION

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your leader on the proposed Austro-German customs union (I do not think it advisable to use the word *Zollverein* on account of its historical implications and its possible unpleasant repercussions on the psychology of hypersensitive nations) made no mention of one very crucial point—namely, the height of the new Austro-German tariff. This is an economic point, but it is really more than that because it is a test of whether Austria and Germany mean the proposal to be a step towards closer economic co-operation in Europe or merely a camouflage for that which the hypersensitive nations fear. Whether the fear is justified or not is a question that should not enter a clear statement of the issues involved.

As the *Economist* pointed out last week, the new tariff that is going to be common to both Austria and Germany is likely to be as high as the present German tariff, and, therefore, higher than the present Austrian tariff. For the non-contracting parties that means a further barrier to European economic freedom by the extent to which the present Austrian tariff is raised. Assuming this barrier to be temporary and negligible, then the crucial points at issue are two. Firstly, will the new "higher" tariff make it easier or more difficult for other nations, say, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, to join the customs union? Secondly, if it renders the entry of other nations more difficult, will Austria and Germany, jointly or separately, be willing to enter into agreement with other nations on a tariff basis that is lower than the one they have decided between themselves? Before a definite answer has been given to these two questions, it is difficult to form a correct opinion about the proposed customs union, as to whether it is a step towards European economic co-operation, and as to whether Austria and Germany will be "willing" to "enter into negotiations of similar agreements with any other country putting forward such a desire."—Yours, etc.,

R. TIRANA.

44 Gordon Square, W.C.1.
April 4th.

MR. SNOWDEN'S PROBLEM

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I help Mr. Snowden by again suggesting what I did in a letter to the *Nation* a year ago that he should consider a revenue stamp on match boxes, a proposal made by Mr. Lowe when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer; also a stamp on all boxes of cigarettes, the amount to be according to their content. I think a large revenue would accrue from both, and if it led to less smoking, and especially by the youth of both sexes, that would be a gain.

Without doubt the tea duty should be reimposed: Mr. Churchill wantonly threw away a source of revenue there. That there should be a duty on coffee and not on tea appears to me unreasonable. To my mind coffee is the better and more wholesome beverage and the greater consumption of it means the greater consumption of milk, and this would help the dairying industries.

I wish some eminent doctors would take this matter up; a medical campaign would go far. I am glad to see you advocate a duty on women servants as well as men servants; a guinea a head for both could easily be paid by anyone who can afford a servant at all. I suppose a tax on expenditure requires more time to think out than is possible for the forthcoming budget, but it seems to me that two and a half per cent. or sixpence in the pound on all bills of 5s. and upwards, and on all expenditure other than for doctors' bills and school bills and charity, would bring in all the additional revenue the State may require and be more equitable than adding to the Income tax. Of course suspension of the Sinking Fund and repayment of the National Debt should be held in abeyance till such time as the country's trade improves.—Yours, etc.,

Lady Place, Sutton Courtenay, Berks. CHAS. ROBERTSON.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your issue of March 28th, in referring to Mr. Philip Snowden's forthcoming Budget, you say: "The £300 millions we are called upon to find each year for the service of the Debt is a grossly inequitable charge in face of the changed level of prices and an obstacle to every kind of social and economic progress." I would like you to explain about the £300 millions, as I do not understand what you mean by that statement.—Yours, etc., INBHISNIS.

2 Abbotsford Terrace, Greig-street, Inverness.

[What we meant was, of course, that the fall in prices, unaccompanied by any corresponding reduction in the money principal or interest of the War Debt, imposes an inequitably heavy charge on the community for interest and sinking fund, and leaves too little of the proceeds of taxation available for measures of social reform or economic development. In recent years we have been paying about £300,000,000 for interest and management of the Debt, apart from Sinking Fund.—ED. *N.S. and N.*]

HANGING

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The logical inference from Miss Durham's letter is to argue, as perhaps she would, that everyone whose liberty the community restricts for long periods, including hundreds of thousands of insane and mentally deficient persons, should be painlessly killed off on humanitarian grounds. History is against the view that progress is to be found along those lines. And many will feel that man possesses no scales which can weigh the value of any human life.

Miss Durham is in error in thinking that a life sentence in this country means twenty-five years. The average term served under life sentence in England is less than fourteen years. If such a sentence were, as she argues, so much worse than death, why do condemned men almost invariably welcome reprieve? In any case the principle which should underlie our criminal law is not the infliction of the penalties most preferred, but of those considered most desirable by the community.

Miss Durham is too sanguine when she refers to the majority

of cases where "there is no shadow of doubt" as to guilt. If death had been the penalty for every offence for which in our wisdom we believed "there was no shadow of doubt," I fear we should have hanged a good many innocent people.

If Mr. Cleeve, another of your correspondents, had had the opportunity of reading the Report of the 1888 Select Committee under Lord Aberdare as to the carrying out of capital sentences, with its gruesome record of heads being pulled off and of deaths by slow suffocation, he would not be so reassured about instantaneous death. The Report was so horrible that it was never published and even the House of Commons Library apparently has no copy. Though the method has no doubt been "improved" in some particulars as a result of the enquiry, no one who knows the facts can maintain that death is *in every case* instantaneous. But even if it were, it is the anticipation of death and not the physical pain of death itself which constitutes the torture. And what supporters of the death penalty continually refuse to realise is that those who desire its abolition are concerned not only with its victim, but with its evil consequences upon the whole community.

Among the latter is the unhealthy sensationalism in the press, the results of which your correspondent Mr. Fitch deplores. The remedy for this is not a newspaper censorship, to which there are grave objections, but a removal of its primary cause, which is capital punishment itself.—Yours, etc.,

E. ROY CALVERT.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Shaw, as usual, has said the last word on this social dilemma—"We must eliminate the Yahoo"—and if Mr. H. W. Nevinson knows a better way than hanging he should declare it.

But, from his inside source of information about how Mrs. Thompson met her fate, he should acquaint himself of what becomes of men and women kept captive for life, and also of what happens to the souls of men and women paid to inflict that punishment.

What sort of man would not sooner take breakfast with a hangman, who has done a dirty job of work in the manner of a Harley Street surgeon, than drink with a chief warder, who has spent thirty years in cowing and spying? Who would not sooner answer to their social conscience for the prison fate of Arthur Rouse than for the prison fate of Stinie Morrison?—Yours, etc.,

Sutton. CHARLES D. IRONS.
March 17th.

EPSTEIN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—"What is Beauty?" is as pertinent a query as "What Is Truth?" Epstein's "Genesis" probably has no single ingredient of what most people consider either beauty or truth. But I cannot see what difficulty there is in "understanding" the artist's treatment of his subject! Here is a colossal maternal figure who is to bear men and nations. The ape-like hands are repellent in themselves, but the face, with its projecting lower lines which lend artistic balance to the torso, is itself brooding and pregnant with the beginnings of mind.

This (albeit far from my own belief) is the very well-known gospel according to Sir Arthur Keith, and, within the limits of that idea, Epstein has certainly seen the light and produced a great and arresting work.—Yours, etc.,

London, W. 1. IRENE HAY.

SQUEAK AND GIBBER

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Aldous Huxley's learning is so great, and his matter so excellent, that one can but wish he would use less levity when he writes to remind the public of the great facts which those "who see and know" have reached to, concerning the constitution of the human mind, and the origin of many present-day beliefs. It seems to me he drives back by his levity and sarcastic phrases many who are timidly feeling for light. The title as above of his clever article in your paper a week or two back is enough to prevent people who are sensitive from reading it—the words of a jester over one of the most solemn beliefs of all religions.

Mr. Huxley writes to inform us, and he wishes to be plain and realistic, but people do not take in knowledge quickly when it is presented with a box on the ear. Someone has said all thought begins in feeling, get the sympathy of your hearers, speak to them in familiar phrase, and those will listen to you who would otherwise have turned a deaf ear. Schiller said "only through the morning gate of the Beautiful, lies the way into Wisdom's Land." This always seems to me in the case of children immensely true. Get their feelings touched and they are ready to enter into the realms of knowledge opened by you. Mr. Huxley is trying to show, in relation to the question of immortality, how it is quite clear men's opinions varied, as the ages rolled on and their minds changed. He might have said how greatly the question of heredity comes into all beliefs and opinions. People say "my friend *must* be alive, he appeared to me so vividly in the night," and this feeling is simply because parents held the same view in times when, from ignorance, the belief in ghosts had a much stronger hold on men's minds than it has now.

We have got to attribute a great deal more to the reality of heredity than we have yet done. Francis Galton, Karl Pearson and the Eugenists, teach us this. I regret that Mr. Huxley has not dwelt on this aspect a little more. Just as the colour of the hair and eyes descend to us in the most inexplicable way, so do powers and thoughts, fancies and tendencies.—Yours, etc.,

Harrow. ELISABETH COBB.

THE INTERNATIONAL STARVATION RACE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Nigel Birch takes exception to my remarks on the present wage-reduction campaign on two counts; one, that I confuse money wages and real wages, and therefore represent as a net loss to the worker what would really be only an offset to the gain resulting from lower prices; two, that extra efforts in research and extra all-round efficiency are at least as likely to result from easy prosperity as from the constant spur of a "forward" wage policy.

On the second and less important of these two points it is enough to say that both the *a priori*, psychological probability and the broadly observed facts are against Mr. Birch. More funds may be available for research, as for other things, when profits are easy; but whether such profits are equally good for enterprise in organisation and marketing, for the elimination of waste and the sifting of personnel, and for all-round progressiveness, is another matter.

On the more important first count, I would point out that nobody has yet suggested a reduction in debenture and other fixed interest charges, nor yet such a stringent reduction of rents as Sig. Mussolini's admirable edict has brought about in Italy; nor have we seen any comparably uniform and substantial cut in retail prices. Admittedly the effect of the slump is to increase the real incomes of wage-earners, *rentiers* and landlords, while reducing that of business men, and admittedly the results are serious. But my article was a protest, which I here repeat, against the widely held theory that the only way out is to reduce, *not* rents, retail prices or interest payments, but wages and wages alone. Perhaps money wages will have to come down in the end; but they should be the last, and not the first, subject of attack.—Yours, etc.,

H. S.

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I believe that reviewers, like those pretty creatures scorpions, are better left alone. I cannot resist the temptation, however, to thank your reviewer for his praise of my book *The First Gentleman*. A feather-weight biography is a happy phrase, and exactly what I wanted to write, after contemplating the heavy-weight biographies in two volumes, of which the first, after a time, goes to be rebound, while the second keeps its original jacket and pages unsullied.

I fear that your reviewer is one of those appallingly selfish persons who, having enjoyed a superior education and too much leisure, wants to keep all the good things to himself. How far, far better was the attitude of Little Jack Horner in the moral tale! How many people have leisure and opportunity to read Creevey, Horace Walpole's Letters (eighteen volumes, I think, in the Toynbee edition), Greville (eight volumes), and some thirty other substantial books?

A reviewer, undoubtedly, has every right to dislike a method of writing, and to say so, but not to give a false impression. It was *I*, not your reviewer, who first pointed out that practically the whole of my material was "borrowed."

Such criticism as: "Mr. Ward . . . recites a passage from an entry made by Lord Glenbervie some months later" is, of course, childish. Do diarists generally record conversations before they occur?

The King's ride to Blackheath took place in 1810 (not 1801 as your reviewer states). The dates at the head of my chapter were 1807–1810. The entry in Lord Glenbervie's diary was:

> October 28th, 1810.—"The first time of his (the King's) being allowed to ride in his riding house he rode out of it without giving any notice to any of his attendants, rode through the Park, to the astonishment of the beholders . . . out at Storey's Gate and over Westminster Bridge, followed, or rather pursued, by equerries, grooms and lifeguardsmen, whom he left at a great distance and totally ignorant of where he was going. His appearance, on his arrival, terrified the Princess. . . . He insisted on seeing her alone, and ordered the Duke of Cumberland, who had overtaken him, to remain in another room."

It may sound a little farcical, but it is very far from the "came and went quietly" of your reviewer.—Yours, etc.,

Hampstead, N.W. 3. GRACE E. THOMPSON.

THE TARIFF ISSUE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Keynes has addressed to me three questions. They are very easily answered:

1. Would I deplore a rise in world-prices? Certainly not. The maladjustment between prices and costs must be rectified, either by a reduction of costs or by a rise of prices. We must do what we can to reduce costs; but this will not suffice, because the decline of prices has been so precipitate. Indeed, prices *must* rise, because the primary producers are everywhere so hard hit that if prices do not improve production will cease. But I cannot agree with Mr. Keynes that anything is to be gained by artificially raising prices *in this country*, and therefore further increasing our costs.

2. Am I opposed to all indirect taxes on articles of working-class consumption? Certainly not. If it were possible to raise the necessary funds, and at the same time to make every citizen aware of his financial responsibilities by means of a universal income tax, I should welcome the total abolition of indirect taxation. Since this is not practicable, certain indirect taxes must be retained. But they must be few in number, of wide and perceptible effect, and so devised that the whole product of the tax goes into the Exchequer. I am opposed to any system of taxation such as Mr. Keynes advocates, which would take from the consumer vastly more than it would yield to the Exchequer.

3. Am I hostile to every reduction of wages? I am always sorry to see reductions of wages, because the attainment of a steadily-improving standard of life is the prime object of economic statesmanship. But I recognise that our wage system is too inelastic. It does not easily enough expand when trade improves, or contract when trade is bad. I recognise also that there has been a serious maladjustment between the wage-levels of sheltered and unsheltered trades. I recognise, finally, that falling price levels, which have been the chief cause of distress, have increased the real value of wages. On all these grounds I admit, reluctantly, that readjustments of wages are necessary. But I wish that we had a system of wage-adjustment (such as we tried to work out in the *Yellow Book*) which would make these changes easier, and make it clear that they were justified. The form of wage-adjustment which seems to me to be least defensible is that by which purchasing power is impaired through tariffs. For this merely increases the cost of living without doing anything to reduce the wage-costs of the export trades, while it also increases their other costs.

In his authoritarian way Mr. Keynes informs us that duties on his proposed scale would only increase the cost of living by 2 per cent. On what is this amazing estimate based? Mr. Keynes's slapdash estimates of the effects of his duties have already been proved, and admitted by himself, to be so wildly untrustworthy that one cannot take a sighting-shot of this sort seriously.

Mr. Keynes's apparent reason for addressing his questions to me was that, in my letter, I confined myself to trying to show the futility and wastefulness of his proposals without putting forward alternative revenue proposals of my own.

Well, let us suppose that the anticipated deficit for next year is of the nature of £50 millions. How is it to be met?

In the first place, by a reduction of expenditure. How substantial this might be, I do not know. The Geddes Committee reduced expenditure by £80 millions in a single year. Mr. Norman Crump has estimated that a reduction of expenditure might now be achieved to the tune of £70 millions. This is too much to hope for. But—including a trenchant handling of Unemployment Insurance—it is reasonable to expect (say) £20 millions.

In the second place, we ought to ask ourselves whether there are any elements in the community which have been positively enriched by the slump in prices which has been so ruinous to industry. There are two such elements: holders of fixed-interest securities, and drawers of fixed salaries and wages which have not been reduced. It ought to be possible to define the percentage increase in the purchasing power of the pound which has taken place during the last year or fifteen months, and to impose on this basis a flat-rate poundage charge on all fixed-interest securities, with allowances in all cases where interest had not been fully paid. This charge would be modified according to a sliding scale in succeeding years. Thus the rentier, who has been enriched by the sufferings of the nation, would make his fair sacrifice. This done, it could fairly be asked that a reduction on a similar scale should be accepted on all salaries and wages above a defined figure. This would be a reduction, but only to an extent corresponding to what may be described as the "unearned increment" of the slump period.

Wage reductions would not, of course, accrue to the Exchequer. But the charge on the rentier would; and it would be substantial, and absolutely just. If this were not sufficient to meet the deficit, I would fill the gap with indirect taxation, imposed *either* on imports not produced in this country, *or* with a countervailing excise. There are several luxury products, such as gramophones, which might without loss be made the objects of both Customs and Excise duties, with rebates for export.—Yours, etc.,

RAMSAY MUIR.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your readers will be indebted to Mr. E. D. Simon for having elicited from Mr. Keynes a clear and frank admission that the proposed Revenue Tariff would probably tend to increase manufacturing costs in the export industries. Everyone will agree with Mr. Keynes that one of the weakest points of his proposal is that it will increase at a critical time the difficulties of exporting the produce of the United Kingdom, a trade which in 1929 was valued at £730 millions. Many of us feel that he has still to face the possibility of further difficulties arising out of the diminished power of foreign countries to buy.

Mr. Keynes goes on, however, to announce "that the industries which compete with imports would be benefited altogether out of proportion to the effect on the export industries." It is a pity that he was unable to add to his all-too-short note on the effect of the proposed tariff on the export industries some indication of the grounds for that opinion, for what he has to say about Germany's capacity to compete is not reassuring. Mr. Keynes asks Mr. Simon whether, supposing exporting manufacturers succeeded in reducing wage-rates, he feels sure "that Germany would not reply with a further reduction of her wages, seeing that we have bound her by treaty under dire penalties to compete successfully with ourselves, and (in effect) however much we reduce our wages, to reduce hers by more." The inference is that Mr. Keynes himself believes that Germany would be bound to reduce wages sufficiently to maintain her volume of exports in the new situation. If that belief were justified, it would prove far too much; it would apply to a revenue tariff as well as to wage reductions, for it would mean that Germany's exports to Great Britain could not be diminished even by a protective or revenue tariff. German exporting industries would be bound to pay the duty, and the British industries which compete with imports from Germany would derive no benefit.

The competition from German exports is, of course, most severe in foreign markets, for only one-eleventh of her total exports in 1928 came to this country. But is it possible that Mr. Keynes is really entirely confused with regard to international competition and local wage-rates? Why does he assume that wage movements in Germany (if not, indeed, in all competing foreign countries) are bound in this way to follow and exceed (in a downward direction) wage movements in Great Britain? Is the

supply of labour to Germany's exporting industries so inelastic that German manufacturers enjoy an exceptional and unlimited capacity to lower their labour costs at will? If the German workers have no alternative but to submit to any wage reductions that employers may think desirable, how is it that the German export industries have failed hitherto to extend their trade and increase their profits further by this very simple device?—Yours, etc.,

ARNOLD PLANT.

19 Wildwood Road, N.W.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In the correspondence which arose out of Mr. Keynes's article, Sir Henry Page Croft writes: "If tariffs generally raise prices, why can our protected rivals undersell us in our Free Trade market?" Surely, it is part of the regular commercial technique in protected countries to make a profit by selling dear at home and dispose of surplus abroad at any price which it will fetch. Once assured of a home market protected against competition, our price-rings will enter into the game of international dumping at the expense of the British consumer. Competitive dumping will stimulate the rivalry of tariffs by making effective protection progressively more difficult, and high home prices, made possible by tariffs, will in turn necessitate more dumping abroad: till the nations seek an issue from the vicious circle either by agreement or by war.

The same correspondent deprecates the fear that prices may be raised, on the ground that the problem of the day is cheapness, and—by inference—that the raising of prices is to be desired. Surely, what the world is suffering from is a form of the so-called "scissors" crisis of Russia, with raw material too cheap to give purchasing power to the producer, and manufactured goods too dear for him to buy; aggravated by a second "scissors" divergence between wholesale and retail prices, due to profiteering or bad marketing or both. It is because the protectionist remedy will widen the "scissors" divergence between raw and manufactured, while doing nothing to abate that between wholesale and retail, that it is so ill-chosen.—Yours, etc.,

18 Gilston Road, London, S.W. 10. JOHN MAYNARD.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—As a wage-earner but not an economist I have read Professor Keynes's articles and the subsequent correspondence. I have not been able to satisfy myself that the proposed revenue tariff will not increase the cost of living and have been led to reason as follows:

The proposed tariff is stated to be desirable because the cost of production of the home-made article exceeds that of the foreign-made article. It therefore appears that if a tariff is imposed the cost of the foreign-made article will be approximately the same as the home-made article. I now buy the cheapest; if the price of the foreign-made article goes up, how is my standard of life going to be affected? The only answer I have been able to give is that my standard of life will fall because, although prices will rise, wages, in face of the determined attacks now being made on them, will not.

Will Mr. Keynes kindly tell us how wage-earners are going to benefit under his proposals?—Yours, etc.,

Plymouth. H.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In your issue of April 4th Mr. Kahn seeks to discredit the view that, other things being equal, imports buy exports. Pursuing a mode of argument not dissimilar to that affected by Mr. Keynes in his recent letters to the *Times*, Mr. Kahn attempts to deduce ridiculous conclusions from this doctrine. The doctrine would indeed be absurd if it led to the conclusion deduced by Mr. Kahn that a rise in domestic costs would cure unemployment. But Mr. Kahn's reasons for thinking this wholly escape me. It would help me, and most of your readers, if Mr. Kahn would tell us what he (or Mr. Keynes) really thinks about this matter. Would he answer these questions?

1. Does he believe that in the absence of foreign investment-yielding income from abroad we could import anything without either borrowing or exporting something in exchange? To suppose the contrary would seem to be merely silly. But perhaps Mr. Kahn (or Mr. Keynes) can explain a secure method of getting something for nothing?

2. Does Mr. Kahn believe that if we cut off *all* imports there would be no effect on exports, other conditions remaining the same? If not, would he explain at what point between free imports and no imports such effects disappear?

3. Finally, and this most intimately concerns Mr. Kahn's own contribution to the discussion, I should really like to understand why he thinks that employment in the export industries is affected in the same way by persuading people abroad to "Buy British" as by doing the same thing at home. If "imports buy exports," it would seem to follow that to buy more at home would not increase employment in the export industries. To encourage foreigners to buy from us would directly increase that employment. Yet Mr. Kahn says that the argument with regard to buying British at home "applies with undiminished force to the buying of British goods by foreigners." Could Mr. Kahn explain this strange statement? Can it be that he has fallen into "pure intellectual error"?—Yours, etc.,

E. F. M. DURBIN.

Potters Bar, Middlesex.

P.S.—I cannot attach any meaning whatever to the obscure reference made by Mr. H. G. Williams to what I said in my earlier letter. It seems incredible to me that the spending of money should put the *spender* into employment. It would encourage Free Traders to find new arguments if Mr. Williams gave the slightest sign that he had understood any of the old ones.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

THE TARIFF ISSUE.

We publish below a small selection of extracts from the extensive correspondence to which Mr. Keynes's proposals have given rise. We have done our best to select the salient points from the letters quoted and apologise to correspondents whose letters are either published in very abbreviated form or omitted altogether.—EDITOR, N. S. & N.

Mr. Keynes asks: "The question which I should like to put to those of the readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION who believe a large reduction of money-wages to be impracticable or undesirable and accept in a general way the "expansionist" policy of the Liberal and Labour parties, is whether they consider that it would be safe, or indeed possible, to proceed with such a policy without the support of a Revenue Tariff." The answer to this question can be found in many contemporary writings, but somehow it seems to be the fashion to despise or even to ignore altogether the well-considered and mature statement. The answer will be found in the "Liberal Yellow Book," and it will also be found in the article by Mr. A. Emil Davies entitled "The Return to Prosperity; or, The Pretended War," which appeared precisely on the same page 54 of your issue of March 7th, following upon Mr. Keynes's original "Proposals for a Revenue Tariff." Why has Mr. Davies been ignored? Did you publish his article merely as a joke? I see no joke in it, but a most profound and subtle approach to a deep economic truth. Mr. Keynes will find an answer also in the recent writing of the well-known American economists Messrs. Foster and Catchings. The answer is most decidedly affirmative.—P. J. M. LARRANGA.

A protective tariff allows increase of home production. An even milder measure, our "Safeguarding Duties," some years ago materially and essentially helped British motor-car makers to "get going." And by dropping prices, and giving more and more money's worth in the item produced, sales have gone up by leaps and bounds. That is common knowledge. The safeguard—and the only equitable safeguard—in imposing a tariff is to require that the price of the article concerned be not raised: be, if possible, indeed, reduced. Outcry against tariffs is begotten, largely, of the fact that the monopoly booster, sometimes in the United States, and most certainly in Australia, *raises prices*, does less trade than he would otherwise do by dropping prices, but makes a larger percentage of profit, *pro rata*, and *employs less people making less things* than he could do if he followed the beneficial example of Mr. Ford in America and our own low-price car makers in Great Britain. Land, as economists are well aware, is a different, a very different, proposition from manufacture. To land the opposite law of "decreasing returns" generally applies. Therefore, whatever is done for farmers—and they *do* deserve consideration—it should not be at the cost of increasing food price to the people.—A. C. GRIEVE, 13 The Willows, Breck Road, Liverpool.

That the recovery of world prosperity is seriously hindered by the monstrous regimen of tariffs is admitted on all hands; the notion that British prosperity can be promoted by our joining in this fiscal insanity is a sign of the virulence of the infection. The example of other countries within and without the British Empire should suffice to prove that tariffs are not elements of prosperity. It will be impossible to prevent tariffs for revenue becoming protective tariffs, and every industry scrambling for its "slice of pie" with well-known consequences; *unless* the essential note of a tariff for revenue—balancing excise duties—is concurrent; and who will stand for that? Mr. Keynes must guess again. A downward extension of Income Tax liability would be

sounder than food taxes. It is better that people should know what they are paying than that they should suffer blindly. The urge to economy has to be felt by the majority of voters before it will become effective in Parliament.—HENRY M. SAYERS, 9 Knollys Road, Streatham, S.W. 16.

Have not some of the participants in the controversy provoked by Mr. Keynes ignored the relative size of the home and overseas markets? Of course, this is not the only, nor even the most important factor, but it seems to me that an advocate of wage reductions must show that the restriction of home consumption will not more than counterbalance the extension of overseas markets, due to lower wage costs. Mr. Keynes seems to have realised the importance of the home market, as well as the natural and forcible objections to such a policy by the wage-earners, who, whether their real wages fall or not, dislike a fall in nominal wages.—R. W. KEELEY, 62 Eastgate, Peterborough.

The only way in which unemployment can be solved is by a reabsorption of the unemployed into industry, and such a reabsorption will not take place until, as Mr. Keynes states, there is restored to the employers a proper margin of profit. He goes on to say that one way of restoring this margin is by increasing the demand for output. The necessary conditions for the maintenance of our standard of living being then the restoration of an adequate margin of profit, and an increase in the demand for output, how are these conditions to be brought into being? Surely the answer is by means of a protective tariff, and not by recourse to a revenue tariff. An adequate margin of profit in the home market is impossible for the British manufacturer while he remains fully exposed to the competition of other industrial countries, for it must be remembered that this competition is often uneconomic in the sense that it may arise out of political necessity. If the home manufacturer is to be helped to make a profit he must be sheltered by a high protective tariff which will enable him to plan ahead with some sense of security, and will ward off violent and unforeseeable economic shocks.—SINCLAIR JONES, 46 Queen Street, Edinburgh.

Miscellany

THE PRÉSIDENT DE BROSSES

By LYTTON STRACHEY

A CHARMING and sometimes forgotten feature of the world as it used to be before the age of trains and telephones was the provincial capital. When Edinburgh was as far from London as Vienna is to-day, it was natural—it was inevitable—that it should be the centre of a local civilisation, which, while it remained politically and linguistically British, developed a colour and a character of its own. In France there was the same pleasant phenomenon. Bordeaux, Toulouse, Aix-en-Provence—up to the end of the eighteenth century each of these was in truth a capital where a peculiar culture had grown up that was at once French and idiosyncratic. An impossibility to-day! It is hard to believe, as one whisks through Dijon in a tram, that here, a hundred and fifty years ago, was the centre of a distinct and vigorous civilisation—until perhaps, one leaves the tram and turns aside into the rue de la Préfecture. Ah! One has come upon a vanished age. The houses, so solid and yet so vivacious, with their cobbled courts and coloured tiles, seem to be withdrawn into an aristocratic resignation. Memory and forgetfulness are everywhere. It is the moment to reflect upon the Président de Brosses.

Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, had become, in the eighteenth century, pre-eminently a city of magistrates. There the provincial *parlement* assembled, and the laws were administered by the hereditary judges, the nobility of the long robe, whose rule was more immediate, more impressive, and almost more powerful, than the king's. Charles de Brosses was born into this aristocracy, and grew up to be a perfect representative of its highest traditions. He was extremely intelligent, admirably conscientious, and crammed full of life. He was at once a wit, a scholar, a lawyer, and a man of the world. He resembled the generous wine of the country in his combination of gay vitality with richness and strength. His tiny figure and his satirical face, lost in the forest of a judicial wig, might prompt to laughter—"the corners of one's mouth," said Diderot, "couldn't help going up when one looked at him"; but he was impressive on the bench; and, late in life, was to prove his patriotism by his intrepid resistance when the privileges of his province were attacked by the royal authority. In his leisure he devoted himself to every kind of literary and scientific work. A tour in Italy produced a series of amusing letters which, published posthumously, are still read and remembered; his book on the newly-discovered Herculaneum (1750) was the first on the subject; his *Histoire des Navigations des Terres Australes* (1756) was of use to both Cook and Bougainville; his *Culte des dieux fétiches* (1760) contained a curious speculation on the origin of the religion of Egypt; his *Traité de la formation mécanique des langues* (1765) was the earliest attempt at a science of etymology; and his labours were concluded with an elaborate edition of Sallust (1777) upon which he had worked for thirty years. The growth of knowledge has converted his researches and his speculations into mere curiosities; but it was natural that the citizens of Dijon should have honoured him as one of their most splendid luminaries, and that the Président de Brosses should have been compared in his day to that other great provincial figure of a previous generation—the Président de Montesquieu. Of course, though Dijon was select and Dijon was magnificent, it had to be admitted that there did exist a higher tribunal, at whose bar taste, learning and behaviour received their final doom or their crowning approbation: the drawing-rooms of Paris reigned supreme. In those drawing-rooms the Président was well thought of; he had powerful friends at Court; was it not to be expected that at last, in the fullness of time, his worth would be completely recognised and receive its due reward in the highest honour that could fall to a man of his pretensions—a seat in the Academy? A prize, indeed, that it was impossible not to hope for! The promises of other worlds had grown dim and dubious; but here, among the glorious forty, was a definite, and indisputable immortality—and one, moreover, that possessed the singular advantage of being enjoyable here and now, while the eighteenth century sun still shone on the rue de la Préfecture.

The Président was at the height of his exuberant manhood—he was not yet fifty—when something occurred which had a strange and unexpected effect upon his history. Voltaire, having quarrelled with Frederick the Great and shaken the dust of Potsdam from his feet, had been wandering for some years in uncertainty among the minor States that lay between France and Germany. He had settled for a time at Colmar; he had moved to Lausanne; then he had gone to Geneva and taken a country house in its neighbourhood. But the Calvinism of the townspeople, who frowned at his passion for private theatricals, annoyed him, and his eye fell on the territory of Ferney, which was just inside the borders of France, but, lying on the eastern slopes of the Jura mountains, was so remote as to be almost independent of French control and within a drive of the free city of Geneva. This was exactly what he wanted—a secluded abode, where he would have elbow-room for his activities, and from which he could bolt at any moment if things became too hot for him. Accordingly, in 1758, he bought Ferney, where he lived for the rest of his life; and at the same time he entered into negotiations for the purchase of a neighbouring property—that of Tournay—which belonged to the Président de Brosses. The Président, who already had a slight acquaintance with the great man—his wife, a Crévecoeur, was the daughter of one of Voltaire's oldest friends—declared that he would be delighted to oblige him. There was some stiff haggling, for each party prided himself

on his business capacity, but eventually Voltaire, for 85,000 francs, became possessed of the domain of Tournay—which included the right to the title of Count—on a life tenancy. The bargain, obviously, was something of a gamble; the new Comte de Tournay was sixty-four and, so he declared, on the point of death; but then he had been on the point of death ever since anyone could remember. When it was all over, the Président had an uneasy feeling that he had been done. The feeling increased as time went on, and his agent informed him that the estate was being allowed to go to rack and ruin. He complained, but the poet replied with a flat denial, declared—what was quite true—that he had built a theatre at Tournay, and begged the Président to come and see his latest tragedy performed in it. A little later a new manœuvre began; Voltaire proposed that he should buy the property outright. The Président was not altogether averse, but this time he was far more cautious; as the negotiations proceeded he became privately convinced that an attempt was being made to cheat him, but he said nothing; and the proposal lapsed. Voltaire, on his side, was none too pleased with his bargain. The land of Tournay was poor, and the countship had brought with it various responsibilities and expenses not at all to his taste. He was vexed; and his vexation took the form of bothering the Président, in letter after letter, with a multitude of legal questions upon points connected with the property. The Président was also vexed, but he answered every letter and every question with extreme civility.

In this way two years passed—two years during which the Président published his *Cult des dieux fétiches* and Voltaire his *Candide*. The old creature at Ferney was at last beginning to settle down to the final and by far the most important period of his immense and extraordinary career. Free, rich, happy, with his colossal reputation and his terrific energy, he was starting on the great adventure of his life—his onslaught upon Christianity. Meanwhile, his vitality and his pugnacity were satisfying themselves in a multitude of minor ways. He was belabouring Rousseau, torturing Fréron, annihilating Le Franc de Pompignan; he was corresponding with all the world, he was composing half-a-dozen tragedies, he was writing the life of Peter the Great, he was preparing a monumental edition of Corneille. When, in the midst of these and a hundred other activities, he received a bill for 281 francs from a peasant called Charlot Baudy for fourteen loads of wood from Tournay, he brushed the matter on one side. More bother from Tournay! But it was ridiculous. Why should he pay for wood from his own estate? And besides, he remembered quite well that the Président, before the sale was completed, had told him that he could have as much wood as he wanted. He did nothing, and when Charlot Baudy pressed for the money, refused to pay. Then, early in 1761, a letter arrived from the Président. "Agréez, Monsieur," he began, "que je vous demande l'explication d'une chose tout-à-fait singulière." Charlot Baudy, he continued, had, *before the sale of Tournay*, bought from the Président the cut wood on the estate; Baudy had now sent in his account of what he owed the Président, and had subtracted from it the sum of 281 francs for wood supplied to M. de Voltaire; his reason for this was that M. de Voltaire had told him that the wood was a gift from the Président. "Je vous demande excuse," the letter went on, "si je vous répète un tel propos: car vous sentez bien que je suis fort éloigné de croire que vous l'ayez tenu, et je n'y ajoute pas la moindre foi. Je ne prends ceci que pour le discours d'un homme rustique fait pour ignorer les usages du monde et les convenances; qui ne sait pas qu'on envoie bien à son ami et son voisin un panier de pêches, mais que si on s'avisait de lui faire la galanterie de quatorze moules de bois, il le prendrait pour une absurdité contraire aux bienséances." The sarcasm was clear and cutting, and the Président proceeded to give his own account of what had occurred. He distinctly remembered, he said, that Voltaire, at the time of the negotiations about Tournay, had, in the course of conversation, complained of a lack of firewood, and that he had thereupon recommended Baudy as the man who would supply Voltaire with as much as he wanted. That was all; the offensive notion of a present had never entered his head. "J'espère," he concluded, "que vous voudrez bien faire incontinent payer cette bagatelle à Charlot, parce que, comme je me ferai certainement payer de lui, il aurait infailliblement aussi son recours contre vous; ce qui ferait une affaire du genre de celles qu'un homme tel que vous ne veut point avoir."

It was obvious to anyone in his senses that the Président was right; that his account of the matter was the true one, and that, as he had said, the only reasonable thing for Voltaire to do was to pay Baudy the money—the miserable sum of money!—and finish the business. But Voltaire was not in his senses—he never was when even the most miserable sum of money was concerned. He could not bear to think of parting with 281 francs. It was monstrous; the land and everything on it was his; the wood had been given him; he would not be set down; and this wretched man had dared to be ironical! At any rate, he had had the wood and burnt it, and the Président de Brosses might do what he liked. Accordingly, in his next letter, he airily dismissed the subject. "It is no longer a question," he said, "of Charles Baudy and four loads of wood—" and proceeded to discuss an entirely different matter. The Président replied in detail and then reverted for a moment to Baudy. "Four loads—read *fourteen*; you dropped a figure; we call this a *lapsus linguæ*" and he begged Voltaire once more to avoid the painful publicity of a lawsuit. Voltaire made no reply; he hoped the whole thing was over; but he was wrong. In June, the Président sued Baudy for 281 francs, and in July Baudy sued Voltaire for the same sum. The cases came on at the local court, and were adjourned.

(To be concluded next week.)

MR. ALDOUS HUXLEY, THE STAGE AND THE SPIRITS

THREE matinée performances of *The World of Light* were given under the supervision of Mr. Leon M. Lion last week. The acting came near to being as good as it could be, the audience was profoundly attentive, the play most unusually interesting, and its reception by the press has been good. A few critics, whose standards must be really higher than we supposed from their praise of other plays, ran it down; but approval was louder. Encore! Mr. Huxley, more, please more! It is to those cries he must listen, for *The World of Light* shows a remarkable talent for the stage. Lest he should pay too much attention to adverse verdicts, let me remind him that in some quarters there is a tendency to scare intellectuals off the theatre, that a play about which it is impossible to write quickly invariably gets some bad notices, and that it is a consolation to some critics, who feel perhaps that their average reports hardly do justice to their own abilities, to show that they can at least despise the work of an exceptionally clever man.

Mr. Aldous Huxley's play proved what an advantage it is for a playwright to possess in himself intellectual resources. Our stage usually concerns itself with people who are a little dull in mind. If we took a census of the stage-population over the last seven years, the proportion of

characters with anything approaching to an intellect would be lower than among the same number of real people, selected presumably for the interest of their adventures in life. Now the adventures and predicaments of the thinking sort are not more moving than those of the mindless, but they are more various and curious. Hamlets, on the whole, are more interesting than Othellos. Smashing catastrophes and violent crises are necessary to knock something startling out of plain, unreflecting blocks of humanity, while little Hamlets with quivering antennæ exhibit their depths in quieter contacts with life. In modern realistic drama this is an advantage. But to create such characters the dramatist must be himself intellectual; so the last thing critics should do, if they want an interesting and varied stage, is to warn intellectuals off it. The intellectuals do justice to situations which arise out of the clash between simple and complex characters; these are always dramatically entertaining, and they are familiar with them in their own experience. If, too, religion, or indeed any systematic attitude towards life, political or moral, happens to be part of a subject, they alone show its many facets. Have they not spent their own lives in walking round creeds, in collating ideas and in digging at the roots of belief? In these respects they have a prodigious pull over non-intellectual dramatists. But their habits of mind lead them to distrust emotion. They learn to love the probe, but dread the glow. They are apt to shrink from conclusions; and a play without a conclusion is, well, to put it mildly, a play with a drawback. The stream of interest in a novel may lose itself in delta-rivulets without our protesting loudly, but in a play the main current must plunge over a fall.

Mr. Huxley is, of course, an arch-intellectual. There lies the explanation of his play being absorbing, rich, pointful, superior—and also of its close shocking me. I had a curious experience in the theatre. I found myself clapping till my hands tingled at the end of every scene, every act; the acting had been so invariably excellent, the situations so taut and the dialogue so true. But when the final curtain fell I fished for my hat with a groan. "Butter-fingers! Everything prepared, led up to—and, plump, he let it drop!" I muttered indignantly, "Why in the name of common sense, proportion, art, did he let us down at the end like that? Where was the point of it? What was he afraid of? The obvious? Surely not. The obvious is the crown and glory of a work of art; subtlety only a painful necessity; he knew that." Thus I soliloquised furiously. It was not until I had walked some way that I could even entertain a plausible guess at an explanation. But please note, this protesting hubble-bubble within me was a measure of the admiration and interest which the play had previously excited. No one cares a jot about mediocre work going wrong. To show why my disappointment was justified, and at the same time a prodigious compliment to the dramatist, I must analyse rapidly a rather intricate play with about ten times as much in it as an ordinary one—and that is not easy.

Spiritualism, though there are two seances in the play, was not the theme of *The World of Light*, though some true things were said about it, and others suggested. In the first place, Mr. Aldous Huxley has science in the blood, and he is aware that the great field for new discoveries is always the unclassified residuum of phenomena; those exceptional and irregular occurrences which neighbouring sciences find it easier to ignore than absorb. In the case of spiritualism such phenomena occur in circumstances so favourable to fraud and error that they are particularly suspect; moreover ninety-nine out of a hundred books in which they are collected and commented upon are (it is obvious the moment you poke your nose into one of them) intellectually disreputable. They are mostly written by people who appear to think that anything unusual or unexplained proves their special conclusion. In *The World of Light* the central crisis is the moment when a bereaved father and a heart-sick girl discover that the youth, son and lover respectively, with whom they believe they have been in communication "behind the veil," is alive. He interrupts their seance just as the concertina, announcing the presence of his spirit, has begun to play in the dark his favourite air. This is not an object-lesson in complete scepticism, but it reminds us that telepathy may sometimes explain occurrences attributed to spirits. Yet the pros and cons of an open question are emphatically *not* the dramatic subject. What Mr. Huxley was interested in was a far fitter subject for a drama: the appeal which Spiritualism makes to human nature, the type of person for whom it can be a substitute for religion, and the moments when its appeal is strongest. To me that indentification is profoundly repulsive. The connection between religion and survival after death is adventitious; the link is the goodness of God as interpreted by man: if God is good surely He will preserve my personality intact for ever and ever? But it is easy to envisage a universe in which human beings never died, and yet religious emotions had no place. Indeed, the glimpses of the Spiritualists' heaven, vouchsafed through trances and rappings, resemble such a world. It is so pitiably like our own that one is inclined to answer the question "O death, where is thy sting?" by replying, "Up the medium's sleeve." Such a heaven only brings comfort to those whose "immortal longings" are confined to the humble desire not to die, at any rate so soon, or to see again someone who is dead. It would be disgraceful to take a superior attitude to desires so poignant and honestly human, but it is also human to remember that there is much more in religion than the satisfaction of those desires. Mysteries make an especial appeal to matter-of-fact people, whose experience has never been lit by poetry, romance or reflection; if you have never lived in the imagination you will welcome marvels at all costs. And to those who are approaching the end of humdrum experience, dimly but deeply conscious of having missed nearly everything, a mere prolongation of existence may seem a heavenly boon. Mr. Aldous Huxley chose, therefore, for his central figure, for his Spiritualist, a tender-hearted, methodical, elderly man. Mr. Wenham, chartered accountant (Mr. Aubrey Mather's gestures, gait, and—to youth—exasperating sunset meekness of address were exactly right) has never taken a risk, never strayed off the asphalt path of duty, in his life, never, though he was made for intimacy, come close to children, wives or friends. He is so modest that he even shrinks from the use of the first person, preferring to say "One doesn't do this" or "One doesn't do that" (A good touch). But he knows, at last, too well that he exists alone in a monotonous world, a world in which responsibilities are the only realities and love cannot be found. What a susceptible subject for the appeal of religious Spiritualism! But there is a gentle, firm integrity in old Wenham too, which—*this* is what his creator forgot at the end of his play—does link him to those who dare, and to those in whom life's sap is rising not subsiding, and do not feel as yet the pathetic longings of spiritual mendicancy. *The World of Light* is a remarkable play if only because it brings home poignantly the difference between youth's view of death and life and that of age. And this is really the main theme of the play, Spiritualism being merely a means of bringing that contrast to an issue.

Old Wenham has a son. Hugo is a Hamletish youth, much inclined to exclaim: "O, what a base and peasant slave am I," because his home education has made him play, invariably hitherto, for safety. Thus, when his

father, at the prompting of his step-mother, who represents complete contentment with the actual, persuades him to propose to Enid whom Hugo does not love, Hugo does so. But his more honest, adventurous self, with the help of alcohol, is spurred to rebellion against his home-bred "conscience" by his friend, the life-worshipper, Bill Hamblin. Hamblin persuades Hugo to fly—literally—to the South Seas with him in an aeroplane; and Enid, who knows that she has blackmailed Hugo into a promise of marriage by showing her passion for him, is left desolate. The report of a crash, however, opens a new avenue of comfort to the two people to whom Hugo's death meant most; to his father and to the girl. Through a medium (most admirably acted by Mr. Brandon) they get into touch with Hugo's spirit, and the communications are so surprising that old Wenham publishes them in a book which makes a great impression and sells by the thousand. It is after its publication that Hugo returns with his friend. The life-worshipper has fallen into a cactus bush and has been blinded. (Note here Mr. Aldous Huxley's integrity; though he sympathises with Hamblin's philosophy, he knows it cannot see a man through anything; Bill Hamblin has become a touchy, egotistic invalid.) But what is Hugo's father to do about his book? Through that unpleasant person, the medium, he had enjoyed with his son the kind of intimacy he has missed all his life; and out of gratitude for supernatural consolations Enid has meanwhile yielded to the desires of the medium. What is the living Hugo now to them? He was everything to them while he was "dead"—but now? Enid's life is widowed. She was a maternal sort of woman always, and her happiness lay in "mothering" men, which Hugo could not bear—perhaps she will find it in cherishing the blind, impetuous Hamblin? And old Wenham? Deep in himself he feels he must recant his book; it was misleading. Perhaps, though he loses his faith in "the world of light," he may maintain that closeness to his son he had enjoyed while he fancied his son was a spirit? Father and son talk together; the gulf between them cannot be bridged, says the son. It is true, no doubt. But still the old man's problem remains. Is he to recant? Hugo cuts the knot by voluntarily disappearing again without a word to his father. He accepts £1,000 from the publisher of the book, who is only too glad to avoid an exposure which would destroy profits, and old Wenham is left alone upon the stage peering about in a bewilderment not unlike the old servant at the end of *The Cherry Orchard*. His problem has not been solved, but shelved.

I trust that this brief account of the play has given some idea of its merits and interests, for only in that case can the reader understand my disappointment with its close. Mr. Huxley, at the last moment, deliberately broke a bridge which *can* unite old and young: a similar integrity of mind towards experience, however different their several needs and sense of values may be. I do not think the dramatist realised the utterly patronising indifference of "intellectual" youth to the problems of the simple-minded implied in Hugo's behaviour; and yet upon the solution of that problem rests the whole meaning of the intellectual life.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

The Camargo Society

ON the evening of April 26th and the afternoon of the 27th the Camargo Society will present its third production at the Cambridge Theatre. It is to be a gala occasion. The success of this Society will be a great factor in the development of ballet in this country; and all who are devotees of dancing should be aware of its activities. The Society was founded last year to give opportunities for English dancers, choreographers, musicians and artists to join together in aid of the art of ballet. In its early days it will depend largely on the traditions and the dancers of Russia; but the hope of the Society is to discover and foster talent in this country, and to offer a centre where the diverse arts, which the perfect production of ballet requires, can be brought together for our entertainment.

Ballet is an expensive art. It has been ambitious, therefore, of the Camargo Society to offer four productions a year, each of which will be given only twice. For this reason it requires the unstinted support of its well-wishers. Previous productions have shown that there already exists in England much native talent which can find no worthy opportunity or environment elsewhere; for Mme. Rambert's admirable Ballet Club can only be for small and intimate productions.

The programme for the third production is of special interest. On this occasion the old Guard of Russia has been called in to support the budding talent of England. Tamara Karsavina and Lydia Lopokova will both dance. To see them together on one evening will recall the most brilliant days of the Diaghileff Ballet. Anna Ludmilla, the American ballerina, will also join them. For the rest, the dancers, choreographers and artists will be English. The programme will probably include: Constant Lambert's *Pomona* with choreography by Frederick Ashton, and décor by John Banting, followed by Glinka's *Valse Fantasie*, a famous piece which Karsavina will produce and in which she will appear. The second part of the programme begins with an important new ballet: *La Création du Monde*, composed to the music of Milhaud by Ninette de Valois, with décor by Edward Wolfe; finally, William Walton's well-known *Façade* will be produced for the first time in England as a ballet with choreography by Frederick Ashton and décor by John Armstrong, in which Lydia Lopokova will dance. Here, then, is an ambitious attempt to bring together the best and bravest talent which contemporary London can show. It would be a pity not to support it; and as attendance at the performances is limited to members of the Society and their friends, those who wish to help this effort should join. The Secretary is Mr. Montagu-Nathan, 5/42, Campden House Court, W.8; and the subscription for the remainder of the season is a guinea, or a guinea and a half for the better seats. This subscription will cover, besides the third production, the fourth production to be given in June next, when it is hoped that the principal feature will be a performance of Vaughan Williams's new ballet *Job*, to be presented after the designs of William Blake.

The Children's Theatre

The Children's Theatre in Endell Street has been providing entertainments for crowded and enthusiastic audiences under somewhat awkward conditions in a building which is cramped and in many ways unsatisfactory. The productions were worthy of much better surroundings, and the present one, called *Good Afternoon*, is being presented for a three weeks' season of matinees at the Little Theatre during the Easter holidays. The entertainment is so good that the future of the venture, which is said to depend partly on the success of this season, should be rosy. Grown-ups who take children will find themselves pleasantly nursed from a state of condescension to one of personal delight. With a considerable variety of material, including a fifteen-minute opera, a short play with words and another without, and various songs with appropriate settings and actions, a unity is kept throughout, and this gives the proceedings an

air of a Christmas party with exciting differences. Mr. Brember Wills is a delight, particularly as a toreador who fails to rise in his profession on account of his habit of making friends with the bulls; so is Mr. Geoffrey Wincott, who has a winning way which meets with great approval from the youthful audience, which is not by nature uncritical, a fact which is never lost sight of in these productions. All the members of the cast enter into the proceedings in fine style, and the applause is long, loud and varied in nature. There will be a time when such things as "Green Grow the Rushes O" and "The Tin Gee-Gee," as produced by the Children's Theatre, will be universally applauded classics.

"The Bat Whispers"

The Bat Whispers, at the Regal, is only remarkable as providing us with the first opportunity of seeing the new wide film about which we have heard so much. The screen is nearly twice as wide as usual, and the effect from the auditorium is certainly at first sight most startling. The spectator has a greater sense of recession and also seems to move about more closely among the properties on the screen. Presumably the wide screen is another step towards the attainment of stereoscopic effects. It was impossible, however, to judge from *The Bat Whispers* what genuine advantages will accrue to the intelligent onlooker from this new invention. For the film was about the most foolish ever seen. We lived in such an atmosphere of trap-doors, winding staircases, dark passages and secret rooms, in such a perpetual eerie gloaming, that it was difficult to make out anything, while there were no out-door effects of any kind to test the new method. The photography was so angular and violent, that a strong feeling of seasickness was induced in the onlooker. On the whole it is best to wait before passing judgment on the wide screen. Sufficient to note here that *The Bat Whispers* was received with considerable hilarity.

"Autumn Crocus"

Autumn Crocus, at the Lyric Theatre, will seem to those who do not shrink from sentiment the most delicious evening's entertainment now to be found in London. Miss C. L. Anthony, whose first play it is, has something yet to study in the matter of mechanics and plot-handling. Her story is over simple, and the many things extraneous to the action tend to delay its opening and retard its finish. But to insist upon such a minor flaw in face of her undeniable and startling skill in character, in caricature, and in atmosphere would be ungrateful.

Of course, there never was such an inn or such an innkeeper as these which bewitch the imagination of poor Fanny Graham. Holidaymaking in the Tyrol with a dragon colleague, for one torturing, glorious hour she is willing to escape for ever from the drab routine of schoolteaching in Manchester, only to be hectored back to respectability and the Innsbruck omnibus by a travel schedule. For that matter, Fanny herself, with her charming, wistful incapacity would surely have been snapped up by some enterprising and probably odious Mancunian years before the married innkeeper fell in love with her. Yet it is a tribute to Miss Anthony's capacity for interweaving romance and reality that these things seem possible in the glamorous autumn of the Tyrol; and the love scenes, compounded of Mr. Francis Lederer's impassioned vitality and Miss Fay Compton's tremulously dawning vision of ecstasy are moving and beautiful. There is also in this inn rich comedy. There are the two young people who, on principle, are living in self-conscious freedom on Russian novels and books on psychoanalysis. Caricatures these, but drawn with a firm, comic line. Miss Jessica Tandy and Mr. Jack Hawkins are both excellent. Then there are the vicar and his sister, neither of them caricatures. Mr. George Zucco's touch is infallible and Miss Muriel Aked indulges in a full-length portrait of mingled fatuity, shrewdness, and indomitable spirit which is joyously unforgettable. Miss Martita Hunt, Mr. Frederick Ranalow and Miss May Agate are nearly as good in the smaller parts.

* * *

Things to be seen and heard in the coming week:

Saturday, April 11th—
Rugby Football, The Army v. The French Army, Twickenham.

Sunday, April 12th—
London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Felix Weingartner, Albert Hall, 8.
Mr. J. A. Hobson on "The New Moral Outlook in Industry," Conway Hall, 11.

Monday, April 13th—
London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Lawn Tennis, Hard Courts, Roehampton.
Shakespeare Dramatic Festival, Stratford-upon-Avon.

Tuesday, April 14th—
"Bush Fires," by Harry Tithe, Fortune Theatre.
Flower Show, Daffodils, Horticultural Hall.

Wednesday, April 15th—
"To-morrow," by C. B. Fernald, Arts Theatre.
Professor J. W. Gregory on "Race as a Political Factor," Conway Hall, 7.
B.B.C. Symphony Concert, conducted by Albert Coates, Queen's Hall, 8.

Thursday, April 16th—
Courtauld-Sargent Concert, London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I HAVE always opposed the movement to fix the date of Easter; yet this year for a moment I wavered. On Friday, to one who spent that day in the traditional manner, the rain mattered little; but the wet of Easter Eve was inordinate, and on Easter morning the very bells from across the valley sounded humid. Easter Monday set in wet, grew wetter, and ended in a crawling pervasive mist which only long residence in the country prevented me from calling a fog. Yet whether the fixing of Easter would settle this dastardly business of the weather I very much doubt. Only last month we had nearly a week of delicious warm, sunshiny weather; there are parts of England where it is hot in February, and there are others where it can be wet, cold and disgusting in May, June, July and August. So if Easter Day was fixed for the second Sunday in April, I doubt if we should be any better off in England, so far as weather goes; the countries in which fine weather starts regularly with the first snowdrop do not deserve consideration, and I cannot think that the other alleged conveniences of a fixed Easter are worth troubling about.

* * *

And, after all, why complain about a wet Easter? There can be no doubt, I think, that the population of these Isles suffers from an over-indulgence in outdoor exercise and sport, and an insufficiency of intellectual occupation. It will not hurt the hardy, knobbly-kneed hiker if she (he) is deprived of a little animal exercise and driven, by sheer tyranny of weather, to use her (his) mind. One of the wittiest of modern authors is accustomed to excuse his dislike of perambulation by asserting that it prevents talk; and I have often wondered about the extent and the quality of the conversation that occurred in those famous rambles on which Leslie Stephen, George Meredith and other great Victorians were so pertinaciously active. I like walking myself, and enjoy rain on a walk; but I have never pretended that these conduce to mental exercise. That is served by the stroll, or by sitting on a *terrasse* over an infrequent *apéritif*, or by lounging, in England, in front of a good wood-fire in a room otherwise lit only by candles. The infrequency of strolling, cafés, wood-fires and dimly-lit rooms in England is simply explained by the fact that the English, as a rule, dislike and distrust conversation. They find it upsetting, as indeed it should be; and it wastes time—the wasting of time is a privilege of the Latins and the Russians and the Celts, not of the English, who prefer to kill it, and succeed in their ambition almost as if Time were a fox or an Exmoor stag, or a gravid otter.

* * *

Yet these same English who dislike conversation, and invent many tedious exercises in order to avoid its occurrence, or any obligation to join in it, will submit quietly to a trial far more necine. They submit to be lectured. After I had gone out for the sixth time on Monday to discover that darkness still covered the land and thick darkness the Cotswolds, I returned and looked through the books I had brought down for Easter. And there, modest and definitely scholastic, was the current volume of the English Association: *Essay and Studies* (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.), edited by Dr. H. J. C. Grierson. Here I found, or at least was persuaded on that dismal Monday that I had found, the secret of the English dislike of conversation. They prefer direct, positive information. They ache to be told; to murmur "Yes" or grunt "No," and return to the important task of discovering how to hit that ball, or whether the earths are really stopped. English learning, which need yield to that of no other nation in the world, has always suffered a little from the English disinclination to converse. It tempts our scholars to be too positive in manner. For instance, when I find an essay that begins "The most truly English figures in our poetry are Samuel Johnson and William Wordsworth," I query quite sincerely Chaucer, Shakespeare, Gray, Crabbe, and Hardy, and with a rather more sophisticated curiosity, I name Langland, Milton, Dryden, Barnes, and Tennyson. Seriously, the opening sentence of Mr. Rylands' "English Poets and the Abstract Word" would be impossible in a culture where conversation was more usual. Long ago he would have been tripped into abandoning it. If one means anything definite in outline or colour by "English," it is plain that Chaucer and Crabbe are far more English figures in our poetry than either Johnson or Wordsworth. Chaucer, indeed, made English poetry; there is nothing so awakening about the intense power of the English genius than the way in which Chaucer subdues to the national temper the storm of Italy and France. And Crabbe! Surely he is a figure unimaginable as a poet in any other country, except, perhaps, America. He might have been a novelist had he been born in Rouen or Quimper, but not a poet.

* * *

The English are shy of conversation, but still glad of the lecture. I know lecturees are of great variety; there are those who go to hear, those who go to see, those who go to be charmed, those who go so that they can say they went, and many others. Yet I, who am what the psychiatrists would harshly call a conversation addict, believe that most lecturees go so that they may contradict in silence, and depart assured, without conflict, of their own rightness. Questions are invited? Yes—but how miserable and pusillanimous a substitute is that for conversation, a substitute governed by time and a harsh and hungry chairman's rulings! If any questions be asked, they are really only disguised statements, not intended to elicit any genuine response. The best kind of essay is certainly the essay which presupposes conversation. Montaigne, Bacon, Cowley, Lamb, Hazlitt—not to wander into more modern fields—are all as good as they are because the reader can imagine the author in friendly discussion. The greatest authors who abandon the conversational convention for the lecture will lose. Even his most fervent worshippers can scarcely uphold Milton as an essayist, and a brilliant weariness overcomes most of us when we read the great Macaulay. An indifferent scholar, like Edmund Gosse, will make a great reputation, since he has the art of conversation; and not all his learning can accustom us to an affection for the work of Dr. David Masson. I am afraid most of the contributions to this year's English Studies come under the lecturer's curse. Those who enjoy the desk, the inkwell, the unshaded electric light and the high confident voice will enjoy this volume; those who care nothing for these things will read the book for the sake of Mr. R. C. Trevelyan's paper on "Classical and English Verse Structure" and Mr. John Sparrow's investigation into the methods of "John Donne and Contemporary Preachers." Which reminds me that the English passion for lectures is the last survival of the passion for sermons. It was much less derogatory to hear and discuss sermons than to perform the religious duties enjoined by the old religion and enter on the dangerous conversation of the shriving-pew. So sermons had it. And sermons have almost passed; and lectures have it. And in time, I suppose, lectures will have their day, and we may return to the neglected fields of conversation.

RICHARD SUNNE.

WILFRED OWEN

The Poems of Wilfred Owen. A New Edition edited by EDMUND BLUNDEN. Chatto and Windus. 6s.

The chronology of Wilfred Owen's life may be compared with that of Keats, the poet whom he, in common with so many youngsters of genius, appropriated as his own. He was born in 1893. At the age of fourteen he obeyed the beckoning hand of his young master and discovered the continent of poetry. In 1910 he matriculated at London University, and in 1913 went to France to recover from a serious illness. In 1915 he enlisted, and after two years' training was gazetted and sent to the Somme. Six months later he was back in an English hospital, having been twice wounded. At that time he described himself as "a conscientious objector with a very seared conscience."

The weeks of sickness dragged on uneventfully until in August, 1917, Captain Siegfried Sassoon arrived at the hospital at Craiglockhart. The acquaintance ripened at once to an influential friendship. Mr. Sassoon's powerful consciousness both in the technique and the spirit of poetry opened the last door for Owen, and he stepped at one stride into a maturity of style, so original and so beautiful that one has to accept him as the greatest of the poets who wrote with first hand knowledge of the War. With all his skill, with all his tricks of half-rhyme and assonance, he conveys without any restrictions of literariness the horror, the waste, the filth and the common human nobility around him. Perfect examples of this expression are found in the two much-anthologised poems, "Strange Meeting" and the sonnet "Anthem for Doomed Youth." They are too familiar to need quoting. But the reader of this new and complete edition of Owen's poems, which Mr. Blunden has made so reverently and with such fellow-feeling, will find that these two poems stand equally amongst the rest of the collection.

Owen was a complete poet: that is to say, a man dedicating the whole of his powers, mental and spiritual, to poetry as a life-vocation, just as such masters as Milton, Wordsworth, Keats and W. B. Yeats have done. His expression was not a mere outcry of youth over-stimulated by the cruel adventure and premature disillusionment of the War. At the age of fourteen he had resolved to be a poet, and was disciplining his mind towards that real wakefulness which people groping through the daydream of ordinary life miscall "idealism." Accordingly, when he got to France and saw the worst that blundering humanity could do, he was not "disillusioned" as so many of less exalted vitality were. Over and above his tired nerves and body his mind soared unbroken, still inspired, still radiant with enthusiasm for the art of poetry, that activity which shame, filth, obloquy, sickness and death can never arrest. He had this power, because he went to the War armed by the poetic practice of detachment learned from his master, John Keats, who said that the poet's function was to be devoid of self, even of personality, and "to hold the mirror up to nature," with a humility so austere that he "could hop with the sparrows on the gravel path."

A lady in Edinburgh, who knew Owen while he was in hospital, has written to Mr. Blunden, and what she says is a witness to the conquest Owen made of this principle. "His sensitiveness, his sympathy were so acute, so profound, that direct personal experience and individual development can hardly be said to have existed for him. He could only suffer, or rejoice, vicariously. . . . The objection that he overlooked individual emotion could only be urged by small natures selfishly engrossed in their woes. To anyone else it was immediately evident that their troubles and their happiness were his."

This power of compassionate detachment, the great poet's sword by which he protects himself and also attacks evil, saved Owen's soul from defeat. After experiencing the worst that the War could do to him, he still found his energy untouched, still burned with the fire of poetry, and still was eager to seek for its heroes to offer them his devotion.

He found Mr. Sassoon. We discover him writing in a letter:

> Know that since mid-September, when you still regarded me as a tiresome little knocker at your door, I held you as Keats, Christ, Elijah, my Colonel, my father-confessor, Amenophis IV in profile. If you consider what the above names have severally done for me, you will know what you are doing. And you have *fixed* my life—however short. You did not light me; I was already a mad comet; but you have fixed me. I spun round you a satellite for a month, but I shall swing out soon, a dark star in the orbit where you will blaze. It is some consolation to know that Jupiter himself sometimes swims out of ken.

The manner is still that of Keats; but the double prophecy is his own. "My life—*however short*": that was to be fulfilled a year later on November 4th, 1918, a week before the Armistice The other forecast, of Mr. Sassoon's great achievement as an artist and of Owen's own fame settling into an orbit of perpetuity, has also come true. The author of *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* will never have a greater tribute than this.

It is no easy matter to show in what way one discovers Owen to be more than merely a "War poet." The gift of pure poetic genius is something we can talk about but cannot describe. Wordsworth called it "imagination," but still we ask for examples as the better way of explaining and vitalising this ambiguous word. But where, in verse, we see an image that brings the universe tumbling down its secrets while the poet pictures a tea-cup catastrophe, *there* is the mark of this excellent quality. It is a matter of revealing the scenery in the country of the soul; pictures such as that of Ruth standing amid the alien corn; or of the Cenci passing through the ambush in the forested ravine; or of the mountain looming up to the young Wordsworth as he sculls across the midnight lake. Here it is in a fragment by Owen, called "A Farewell":

> I saw his round mouth's crimson deepen as it fell,
> Like a Sun, in his last deep hour;
> Watched the magnificent recession of farewell,
> Clouding, half gleam, half glower,
> And a last splendour burn the heavens of his cheek.
> And in his eyes
> The cold stars lighting, very old and bleak,
> In different skies.

Here is another example, in the opening of a poem called "Miners":

> There was a whispering in my hearth,
> A sigh of the coal,
> Grown wistful of a former earth
> It might recall.
>
> I listened for a tale of leaves
> And smothered ferns;
> Frond-forests; and the low, sly lives
> Before the fawns.

So one may go on quoting from this poet marvels of imagination burning white-hot; the magic of image and verbal music filling his poems and crying out to the world that here was the youth of one destined to be a great master could he have had time. But the War denied him that; and our human institutions, our policies and barriers, our national and economic anachronisms, have an additional parsimony to answer for. May God have mercy on our folly!

RICHARD CHURCH.

EDMUND GOSSE

The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse. By the HON. EVAN CHARTERIS. Heinemann. 25s.

For a literary critic who is neither an artist nor a creator there is little or no prospect of posthumous existence. So much is his nature subdued to what it works in that if his writings are at any time re-read it is rarely, if ever, from any interest in the writer. The images reflected upon his mind may continue to enchant, exasperate, or amaze, but the mind itself is a mere mirror, a hueless and insentient thing. This is probably the reason why, though the history of literary criticism is of absorbing interest, full of ironic surprises and strange interludes, literary critics often seem such dull dogs. Their forms move vaguely in a grey middle distance.

To that dim company, bloodless and petulant as the disembodied heroes of Homer, the figure of Edmund Gosse can never be consigned. Though a critic to his finger-tips, he was, as his biographer, Mr. Evan Charteris, well says, "an artist rather than a thinker." He was an observer and an interpreter of the living world about him, a writer of exquisitely pointed and tinted prose, of verse as delicate, decorative and symmetrical as a Japanese colour-print. He had many contacts with a phase of society from which most men of letters lead lives very far removed. "Oft converse with heavenly habitants" of great houses enriched his imagination and his memory; and there are moments when one suspects that Disraeli himself did not draw a more subtle joy from gilded saloons and umbrageous pleasaunces. Yet the satirist in him was never dormant long, and the man of letters kept the upper hand of the man of the world.

Fortunate in his avocations, in his family and in his friendships, fortunate even in those early austerities and endurances which served only to whet his instinctive thirst for beauty, Gosse is now

thrice fortunate in his biographer. Nobody could have brought to the task a warmer sympathy, a finer insight, a more honourable discretion. So excellent are the passages of narrative and description in which Mr. Charteris allows his own voice to become audible that one cannot repress a faint sense of regret that he should elsewhere have adhered so religiously to the principle of letting the subject speak for himself. At the first blush it might seem as if it would be an easy matter to write the life of a man who had written—or partly written—his own. But it is not so; and with such haste does Mr. Charteris traverse the period covered by *Father and Son*, that we suspect him of a conscientious anxiety not to make unduly large drafts on the wealth there gathered up. He might, for example, have told us something about the pious writings of Emily Bowes, whose American descent is not even hinted at in the immortal "record of a struggle between two temperaments," though it is very fully set forth in the life of Philip Gosse; he might have quoted the prophecy of Susan the Cook that the youthful Edmund would "bleed for his Lord in heathern parts"; he might have invoked that strange, lovely vision of the little Plymouth Brother weeping bitterly because he believed that the sacrilegious parasol of Miss Flood had slain the gods of Greece.

When, however, Marychurch and the Brethren are left behind, and young Gosse is duly installed in his lodgings at Tottenham, there is a curious and charming "carry over" of style and treatment which gives an air of unbroken continuity. Not that Gosse's cadences and idioms are consciously imitated, or even unconsciously reproduced; but the lucidity of his thought, the implicit irony and slightly mocking grace of his literary approach, have somehow communicated themselves to his biographer. That is all.

It is too soon to try to assess our debt to Gosse as a critic, and very wisely the attempt is not made here. Many of his judgments have still to bear the beating tides of time, and there are some of them which look a little weather-worn already. His response to literature was temperamental rather than judicial. He loved the Jacobeans, the Augustans, the English Pre-Raphaelites, the French Romantics, because there he stood, God help him; he could no other. To say this is not to belittle his quality as a critic, but, as Mr. Charteris points out,

> He never had the discipline of examinations and "schools," he was pitchforked into the world, he awoke at a bound, he careered at his own will in the fields of literature.

This excess in Gosse of perception over knowledge placed him at the mercy of impatient sticklers like Churton Collins, to whom both the gods and the Graces had denied the delectable gifts freely bestowed upon their victim.

Mr. Charteris handles the Churton Collins episode with candour and tact. Gosse himself once wrote that "there are some natures that are not improved by being humiliated," and the words recur irresistibly as one reads this account of the after-effects of that ordeal upon him. He has had, and will continue to have, his revenge. Charm is a rare and a much more engaging attribute than accuracy, and we would not exchange one of his incomparable pen-portraits, one of his luminous and gently malicious assessments of literary or human values, one single pregnant passage of *Father and Son*, for a hundred quartos of more ponderous chronicle or commentary, unblemished by so much as a solitary misplaced semi-colon.

No life of Gosse containing many of his own letters could be dull reading, even if the intervening matter were perfunctory, or mechanical, or obscure. Yet this admirable volume is almost overladen with correspondence, much of it good, but not all of it noteworthy. We wish we could see some of the letters which called these forth, letters from Swinburne and Dobson, Maurice Baring and Thomas Hardy, André Gide, Siegfried Sassoon, and J. C. Squire. If, as would appear, the rumour that Gosse had written his Memoirs was based only on the existence of a journal limited to his term of service at the House of Lords, not to be published for many years to come, we may at least hug the hope that his full correspondence has been preserved, and will yet be given to the world.

A great deal—perhaps too much—is still left to the imagination of the ingenious reader. Incidents are referred to in letters which remain unilluminated in the text, often, no doubt, because no one is able now to cast even a rush-light glimmer upon them. This, however, is hardly the case with the letter of July 24th, 1877, in which Gosse writes to Austin Dobson:

> I hope that in the excitement of last night I did not say or do anything rude—ruder than usual? This morning I am very tired and very humble. Saintsbury is very interesting, isn't he? . . . Lang I feel we neither of us did justice to, but he seems very nice. It was right, I hope you think, that we should go individually to see Saintsbury? More comfortable for both of us surely than trotting everywhere between the same shafts like a pair of prize ponies. What a plump little cob you are, by the way! What a perambulating sweetness, what a type of amiability, that unnamed and untalked to Fifth was! I ought to have talked to him, but I could not resist the electric Saintsbury.

As this stands in the *Life and Letters* it is unrelated to any recorded chapter or interlude in Gosse's career. Reference to Professor Saintsbury's article, *Some Memories of Edmund Gosse*, in the *London Mercury* of July, 1928, will supply the missing clue. It is there set forth that in the summer of 1877 Andrew Lang invited Gosse, Saintsbury and Dobson to dine with him at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, that they were drawn together by "the idea of a sort of very inferior Pléiade cut down to four," and that this was the first occasion when Gosse and "the electric Saintsbury" met.

Not the least delightful feature in Mr. Charteris's book is the character of the illustrations, among which are three caricatures by Max Beerbohm. Those of us who can remember Gosse only in his last years will now perceive that he was of that happy company whom the hand of time touches not only with indulgence but with a curious spiritualising effect. There was something smooth and slack about the Gosse of the 'eighties and 'nineties, and about the Gosse of the nineteen-twenties there was still a silken quality; but a sort of soft shagginess had then replaced the smoothness of earlier days, and there was a suggestion of lightness, resilience and activity in every movement of body and mind.

This, his authoritative biography, is well worthy of the permanent place which it was predestined to occupy. Gosse himself would have enjoyed it, and there could hardly be higher praise. One or two very trivial slips will probably be corrected in later editions. Such are the substitution of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for *Tom Cringle's Log* on page 11, and the attribution of the well-known musical setting of Swinburne's *Ask Nothing More* to Mrs. Moncrieff instead of to Theo Marzials. The index also would be much the better for drastic revision and expansion.

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CHILE

The Dawn. By DON AGUSTIN EDWARDS. Benn. 28s.

Like many of her sister republics, Chile was born to a stormy youth. The ambitions of strong men, cloaked by a profusion of patriotic utterances or achieved in the name of high-sounding political principles, too often led to unstable or dictatorial regimes or to a too frequent resort to arms. The tempestuous government of José Miguel Carrera and his brothers was encompassed by too many personal enmities to produce that unity which the country so much needed in its effort to expel the last remnants of Spanish authority and to establish the desired independence. Here, as elsewhere in Spanish America, independence was not the first step. It had to come gradually. At the beginning of 1812 we find, in an agreement between Concepcion and Santiago, that one of the articles acknowledges obedience to Spain in the person of Ferdinand VII., unless "Spain were irretrievably lost, whatever the circumstances, in which case independence will be declared." Later in the same year a national flag made its appearance, and the Spanish attempt at the reconquest of Chile, while it drove O'Higgins and Carrera, after the disaster to Chilean arms at Rancagua, across the Andes to Mendoza, produced the union with San Martin which was ultimately to consolidate the movement towards independence. In Mendoza the work of organising a liberating expedition went on steadily. At times it was hindered by the intrigue of such men as the Carreras, who were victims of an arrogance which did not allow them to sink personal prejudices and private feuds in forwarding the cause of their country. While the organisation was aided by the genius of San Martin, it was also strengthened by the attitude of the Spaniards after the reconquest and of the oppressive and reactionary government of the last Viceroy, Marco del Pont. The re-establishment of Spanish power had imposed with added severity the old restrictions of Colonial days, and the even more hated distinction between Creole and Spaniard.

By the victories of the Army of Liberation under San Martin and O'Higgins the Spaniards were finally driven out and independence secured. O'Higgins then exercised a dictatorship for six years. The country was by no means ready for the democratic institutions with which two unsuccessful constitutions would have endowed it. The guidance of a strong hand was much more desirable, and indeed more advisable, in view of the almost certain anarchy which at that time democratic institutions would undoubtedly have produced. Thus the virtual dictatorship of O'Higgins, while in the end it fell a victim to internal forces, gave the country a period of settled rule it so much needed. Yet in 1821, when José Miguel Carrera, the last and most powerful of the three brothers, suffered for his follies, there were still many who were willing to support him against the government. The unpopularity of Rodriguez Aldea, O'Higgins' Minister of Finance, and the resentment at the undue influence which he was supposed to possess over the Supreme Director, was not balanced in the popular mind by the success of the liberating army in Peru, and in 1823 O'Higgins, who had freed his native land and there maintained a stable government for nearly six years, set out for an exile in Peru which was ended only by his death nearly twenty years later.

The fall of O'Higgins brought about a period of disorder. General Freire, though much respected in many quarters, could not maintain his power for more than three years, and the government passed from Junta to Junta, bringing in its train disorder to the country in general and in particular to the Treasury. The rise of General Prieto, and the growth of the power of Portales, saw the arrival of more stable conditions in 1831. Attempts at constitution-making continued, and in 1833 there came, after the impractical code of 1828, the constitution which remained, until the reforms of five years ago, the basis of the Chilean Government. Prieto and his Minister Portales produced order from the political chaos which followed the abdication and exile of O'Higgins. At times the rule was harshly dictatorial, but the financial situation became sounder until the war against Santa Cruz once more drained the national resources. Though at times under-currents of opposition came to the surface, to express themselves by force, the successful issue of the war re-established Prieto firmly in power until, in 1841, he handed over to General Bulnes, the victor of Yungay, the magistracy "of a country respected without, organised and peaceful within."

It was a period of turmoil and change, of idealist conceptions of the State and of fierce party conflicts, of strong personal enmities and of ambitious men. Carrera, however great a patriot, lost all sense of proportion in hatred of O'Higgins and San Martin, not to mention his bitter antagonism to MacKenna. O'Higgins himself fell before an ingratitude which his firm rule had aroused. Portales, who was "the embodiment of political power which prevails over bayonets and military factions," was assassinated at the very outbreak of the Peruvian war by a petty mutiny instigated by some of his political enemies. It was a time of men rather than of policies. It was a time of trial and error, but in the end it produced in the new republic a stability for which some of its neighbours had still to struggle for many years. Don Agustin Edwards, whose work is, as he claims, "more in the nature of condension than of discovery, more like imbuing with colours designs that have been drawn by others rather than painting original pictures," has produced another admirable volume in which the story is told with great charm and felicity of expression and in which the various currents of political life are traced with clearness and care. In looking forward to the next volume may we hope that Don Agustin Edwards will decide to have his narrative again illustrated by the excellent drawings of Señor Vargas Rosas?

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LAUGHING LADIES

Father. By the author of *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

Hope Against Hope. By STELLA BENSON. Macmillan. 21s.

Men and Wives. By I. COMPTON BURNETT. Heinemann. 7s. 6d.

Renée Néré. By COLETTE. Nash and Grayson. 7s. 6d.

The Perfect Hostess. By ROSE HENNIKER HEATON. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

There are a good many women whom some men—unchivalrous, ungrateful brutes that they are—find rather a joke; and, of course, many women get a good deal of fun out of the contemplation of particular men. But woman, as a sex, has never been a jest to men; man as a sex has surely never been anything else to women. Most women, of course, take one or two men quite seriously, far too seriously; but all women, if they were candid, would admit that they find something ridiculous in the mere fact of masculinity. They disguise their amusement.

They keep a solemn face when Adam is telling them—oh! so many things, including his very latest conclusions on that vexed question, the sucking of eggs. There are, however, some unmannerly women who let their faces slip, and in consequence we get a whole comic literature about men, to which we have no parallel in man's writing about women. Woman to the male artist has been a toy, a comfort, a distraction, a seduction, an ideal, a help, a pest, the wine of hell or the chalice of delight—but never a side-splitting farce, as man may be to woman. Isn't nearly all the best women's fiction instinct with the conviction that man, as man, is a joke? That belief is implicit in a great deal of serious-minded fiction; it has always been flagrantly in flower in the novels of her whom we know as Elizabeth.

Father has some of the richest jokes against the masculine, but it is not so full and flavourous a book as *The Caravaners*, or *The Enchanted April* or *Love*. "Father" himself is a famous, high-brow novelist of rather poor circulation. A widower, he rashly marries a child, younger than his oppressed daughter, Jennifer Dodge, who promptly tells him she will leave. Dodge, who has kept that innocent inattention to his female environment only possible to this carefully shielded male, is as astounded as if his desk or his ink-stand had given him notice. Jen goes, however, and has strange adventures with Parson Ollier and his very tiresome sister Alice, while her step-mother is suffering all the distresses of a honeymoon at Brighton. Elizabeth is unrelenting to Father, and yet allows us to see the pitiable in this figure, so much funnier because of his own gift for taking himself with such stupendous seriousness. Ollier is charming, a fairly credible parson, and a quite credible, callow male; Devenish, a fellow-cleric, doomed to marry Miss Ollier, is a concession to Elizabeth's passion for farce—and no one will grudge her that delightful mummet. Every page has delicious comments on the ways of mankind. Take, for instance, from James Ollier's thoughts about the shockableness of his parishioners. He is sitting on a mattress in a garden with Jennifer:

> He knew that though there wasn't any harm—not really, not unless one made harm—such behaviour would offend what the Scriptures called *these little ones*; and the world appeared to be packed with little ones, all being offended by the simplest things. Indeed, thought James, his brain working at twice its usual speed while he hung suspended over the yawning moment, the simpler one's conduct was, and the more natural, the more deeply offended did the little ones seem to become. The countryside swarmed with little ones. The other vicarages were full of them, and Alice was the biggest little one of the lot.

There is rather more sorrow in Miss Benson's attitude to the male than in Elizabeth's. Miss Benson always starts out with hopes that after all the creature will, this time, be reasonable, will forget—what after all no nice woman would cast in his teeth—the fact of his masculinity, and be a person. Always she is disappointed. In some of these short stories her disappointment finds amused expression. Except that anything is possible, one would think no complacency could withstand the satire of "An Out-Islander Comes In," in which the important male is definitely reduced to his most standardised—almost he becomes a "proprietary" article, a pull from the advertisement section of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Mr. Lumley of "On the Contrary" is a perfect little analysis of that positiveness which has made so many English men of affairs the admiration of other countries, while in the title story Miss Benson gives us a farce which borders rather uneasily on tragedy.

Miss Compton Burnett's surprising method is often in danger of defeating itself. There are moments in this book when the reader will recall both *Irene Iddesleigh* and *The Wide, Wide World*. Miss Burnett, in her revolt from realism in dialogue (and most of her book is dialogue) becomes both monotonous and occasionally ludicrous. The book is chiefly concerned with the Haslam family, Sir Godfrey and his wife, and their children, Matthew, Jermyn, Griselda and Gregory. She writes of the grit in family life; her Lady Haslam is terrible as a picture of self-contained egotism, Sir Godfrey is almost unbearable in his voluble self-importance, while the children are like active animals tied to some immovable object. That murder and suicide come into her story is only natural; and the violence of her incidents obtains a sinister force from the strange style of the book. Only quotation can give an idea of its quality. Buttermere is the butler:

> "Well, Buttermere," said Gregory, strolling into the dining-room, "so there you are, as always, at your duty?" "I have not had great opportunity to sit down to-day, sir." "And do you like sitting down?" "I can do with a respite, sir." "Yes, I suppose we all can." "That is, we all could, sir." "You did not know that Mrs. Spong was dead?" "Yes, sir." "Jermyn and Grisel!" Gregory called, as his brother and sister passed through the hall. "You did not know that Mrs. Spong died last night?" "No," said the two together, while a nervous tendency to smile appeared on Griselda's face. "Buttermere knew," said Gregory. "He takes great interest in his fellow-creatures, don't you, Buttermere?" "Well, not to say that, sir. Mrs. Spong was a Miss Dufferin, as I understand." "You don't take any interest in Smithson, your lieutenant?" said Jermyn. "I have seen no reason to remark any cause of interest in him, sir." "No? Well, I believe, neither have I," said Jermyn.

The cumulative effect of the method is really impressive—the sentences gather and gather like low clouds in a hill district: occasionally a breeze blows them drifting away, and there is a glimpse of sky, a promise of sun—then the mists roll up again, and the thunder is evident, though still in suspense. There is something rather cruel, rather horrible in Miss Burnett's talent.

How crystal clear is Colette! Her reputation here is far in advance of her deserts. She is the Gyp of to-day; but lacks the elegance, the *snobisme* of her predecessor. This translation—a very fair one, by Miss Rumfrey-Kidd—of *La Vagabonde* will please those who enjoyed *Chéri*. It seems to us that, but for Colette's skill in narrative, it would be a tedious book. Madame Taillandy has left her brute of a husband and the world in which French gentlewomen live, left it for professional dancing in halls and in pantomimes. Dufferin-Chantel, of her old world, sees her on the stage, learns who she is, and would marry her; she consents to be his mistress, and then weakens—she can neither marry him, nor risk once more the dangers of love. Colette flatters while she mocks; fundamentally she does not find man quite as much of a joke as he seems to Elizabeth and to Miss Benson, and she could never savage him as Miss Burnett does. The best part of the book is the account of the theatrical life, and of the heroine's comradely relations with the other artists.

Miss Henniker Heaton lets the secret out. Though no man thinks of woman, as woman, as a joke, there are women who do. And in this excellent gallimaufry of verse, epigram, apothegm, recipe and anecdote Miss Heaton shows us why. There are new things and old (including Sydney Smith's rhymed recipe for salad dressing), delightful pictures, and a great deal of sound

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THE GROWTH OF LABOUR

"England Arise." By GODFREY ELTON. Cape. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Elton's book is a history of the pioneer days of the British Labour movement, from the foundation of the S.D.F. in 1881 to the formation of the Labour representation committee in 1900. The history is less a record of events than a study of men and movements. The study issues in two conclusions which Mr. Elton keeps in view throughout. The first is that British Socialism is essentially a native product. Continental methods of propaganda, Continental theories and Continental ideals have always found the intellectual climate of British Socialism uncongenial. Transplanted from the Continent they have failed to take root, and, in Mr. Elton's view, this failure was largely inevitable. We simply are not logical enough to take kindly to Marxism, or, it might be said, we are not unreasonable enough to seek to apply the logic of Marxism to life. Secondly, the British Labour Party springs historically from an alliance between the movement of an increasingly conscious working class seeking emancipation, and the collectivist principles of Socialist thinkers. The history of the last twenty years of the nineteenth century is the history of the coming together of these two elements. In 1900 they formed an alliance, and the Parliamentary Labour Party was the result.

The period covered by Mr. Elton's admirably told story is too recent in time perhaps to be treated impartially, and Mr. Elton's treatment is that of a sympathetic but partial commentator; and he provokes inevitably a similar partiality in the reader. He comments, as does Mr. Elton, upon what happens to arouse his interest. Here are three such things.

First the extraordinary similarity which has throughout characterised the reactions of the propertied classes to the demands of the insurgent workers. In the year 1886, when there were riots in Trafalgar Square and windows were broken in Pall Mall, the press and the clubmen anticipated almost word for word their reactions to the General Strike of 1926. The horseplay of the crowds—besides breaking windows, they plundered West End tailors and put on West End trousers in the streets—was hailed as the outcome of a planned and deliberate policy on the part of the leaders, who were, of course, "paid agitators." The leaders, John Burns and Hyndman, were denounced as "notorious ruffians" by eminent judges, and recommended for "a year or two's oakum picking." *Mr. Punch* was pictured as stringing them up as condemned criminals, while the *Times* newspaper was inundated with letters suggesting as cures for the present discontents that the poor should work harder, that they should work more efficiently, accept lower wages, not listen to agitators, and abandon Trade Union regulations which resulted in keeping English goods out of world markets. As for "the unemployed," the great bulk of them were represented then as now as "those who want no work to do," while then, as in 1926, the nation which "had seemed to itself to be drawing near to the edge of an abyss of violent revolution" prudently recoiled.

Secondly, one is struck by the frequency with which the "paid agitators" have followed the path from violence in obscurity to moderation in celebrity. A phenomenon, sufficiently familiar in our own times, has occurred in the past with the regularity of a law of nature from which Hardie alone seems to have been quite exempt. Again and again the men of the Red Flag have been quenched by Whitehall, and the ardent revolutionary has cooled into the considered statesman. Thus Socialism itself, which began as an affair of red ties and long hair, subsides into a business of red tape and safety razors. But that this process is not to be interpreted merely as a betrayal of youthful convictions, that it is often a substitution of useful though modest work for grandiose talk, Mr. Elton makes plain in a shrewd comment upon the career of John Burns:

> In the early 'nineties he was still the chief of the new demagogues. "Office" he cried with a fine scorn . . . , "I am prouder of my present office, Judge Advocate-General of the Poor, than I should be of the Premiership itself" . . . . But gradually as the new possibilities of the usefulness and distinction disclosed themselves, the old, sweeping theories and the laborious agitation began to seem increasingly barren. In Parliament, too, he had begun to look forward to some sort of usefulness.

Thirdly, one sees how the British Labour movement, which was born of inconsistency, was nurtured by compromise. Two forces have struggled for its soul, that of alliance with Liberalism and so with the more radical elements in the possessing classes, and that of revolutionary Marxism. Between them it has persistently steered its course. Thus, the fateful conference of 1900 rejected equally the suggestion that the new Labour members of Parliament should, outside certain selected questions, be free to follow their own political inclinations, that is, should act as individuals and not as a party, and the resolution of the S.D.F. demanding that the new party should be based "upon the recognition of the class war." The rejection of both provoked a characteristic anathema from Hyndman upon the "disgusting addiction of modern Englishmen and Scotsmen to compromise, which, of course, is only a euphemism for the surrender of the weaker side," yet based the Labour Party upon a compromise which, indefensible in logic, was adapted to temperament and circumstance, and provided a stable foundation for future growth.

THE URIC ACID QUESTION

RECENT VIEWS ON RHEUMATISM

Eminent authorities hold the opinion that there is only one malady to which, strictly speaking, the name "Rheumatism" belongs, viz., acute rheumatism or rheumatic fever, the precise cause of which is not yet clear. But, whatever doubt exists in that respect, science has definitely identified uric acid as the pain-inflicting agent in all other maladies which patients call rheumatism.

Chronic rheumatism in the joints, muscular rheumatism in the shoulders and back, lumbago, backache, sciatica in the thighs and neuritis in the arms, are all caused by tiny needle-pointed, razor-edged crystals of uric acid deposited by the overladen blood into the tissues. Take a uric acid solvent to dissolve these sharp, jagged atoms away, and your pain and stiffness will disappear. No treatment that fails to reach the uric acid itself can remove it. The remedy must get into direct contact with these flinty uratic splinters before they can be effectively disposed of. This is exactly what Bishop's Varalettes do, and explains why they are so successful in overcoming chronic arthritis, muscular rheumatism, lumbago, neuritis, sciatica, kidney stone, gravel, and any other malady which owes its existence to an excess of uric acid in the body.

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SHORTER NOTICES

Paris. By MARIO V. BUCOVICH. Rodker. 21s.

A book of photographs of rare accomplishment, this volume will excite all who know their Paris to go there once again, and soon. M. Bucovich has his own Paris; there are little views here, odd cross-wise scenes, that are unfamiliar to us, as well as magnificent pictures of the great things which everybody knows and admires—especially good are the views of Notre Dame, surely the most difficult subject for a photographer, as no representation can challenge comparison with the heavenly original of that shrine seen from the Island. If people still give presents at this season, here is the perfect present for those who like books but do not care for reading; the little preface by Paul Morand is good, but may be skipped.

Religions of the World. By CARL CLEMEN. Harrap. 15s.

This German guide to religions is far better than most popular expositions of scholarly theses. The authors do not altogether escape the danger of over-positive statement, a danger practically inherent in work of this kind; but on the whole their knowledge is well balanced by modesty and a desire to be fair to every aspect of this subject. Professor Clemen himself writes on Prehistoric and Primitive Religion, and also on Persian and Celtic. He is sound and cautious; and of the other essays that can be ranked with his are Mr. Krause's on Chinese Religion, Dr. Hackmann's on Buddhism, Dr. Seeberg's on Christianity and Dr. Babinger's on Islam. The book is very well illustrated.

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The Sign of Security

About Motoring

ARMAGEDDON

SOME years ago I stumbled into moderately intimate knowledge of one of Britain's smaller industries, which at the moment was on the upward grade. Its immediate past has consisted of a period of lethargy, which provided it with easy sales of its modest output, and ended by attracting the attention of some astute American pirates. Applying more modern methods and designing new machinery, they suddenly swooped on some of our markets, and quite deservedly annexed the bulk of them. They studied the customers' tastes intently; they cut our prices to ribbons by clever production; and they did not ignore quality, as American raiders had often done in other branches of manufacture. The bottom fell out of our industry in a few months. The British manufacturer roused himself, and in the herculean struggle which followed, contrived to defeat America all along the front. But the clever youngish men who headed this offensive had a terrible time. Quite apart from the intrinsic problems of their *riposte*, they presently encountered serious troubles, partly due to reorganisation, and partly to the somewhat ruthless driving to which any harassed capitalist is prone in such a struggle. Simultaneously, financiers suddenly saw the chance of substantial profits, and as Britain regained her lost markets and began to expand them, ferocious competition began at home. I knew a number of these men, and though they triumphed, they paid the price. Quite a number of them never again knew what real health was; several of them were laid in premature graves, and others grew old far too soon.

* * *

Such a reminiscence is rather outside the scope of an ordinary motoring article, but as I watched thousands of happy motorists enjoying the amenities of our roads during the Easter holiday, I fell to wondering how many of them realise the strain which bears continuously on the master brains of the motor industry. There are, of course, a few factories enthroned on the summits, whose staffs are immune from the anxieties which beset the builders of popular cars. But anyone who has driven a car for, say, a dozen years, or any speculator who has gambled in motor stocks, can readily recall the ups and downs of many of our plants which construct cheap cars. The motoring public is extraordinarily fickle. One year they fall over each other to get delivery of the Popmobile; and it earns a quarter of a million or even a million for its shareholders or its syndicate. The next year it would apparently be a blunder to modify its design at all appreciably, and it appears in much the same guise as before. But about February the new Zephyr suddenly captivates the pundits; Popmobile sales suddenly shrivel. The Popmobile staff frenziedly prepare a new model for the autumn; conceivably this new model does not please; or it pleases well enough, but it is rather torpedoed by the sudden debut of the Boreas, which is a very similar car listed at £10 less; and the Popmobile people have to cut their price to suit, and sacrifice all their schemed profits. The strain on the designing and directing brains during such battles is quite as severe as the burden which Sir Ian Hamilton carried in the Dardanelles campaign, and is, indeed, rather similar in character. Men grow old; men suffer acute nervous breakdowns; men are broken professionally and financially; shareholders lose their money, perhaps their all; artisan families find their occupation gone, and are possibly faced by a serious migration to some other part of the country, where there may be some demand for their labour. The history of the motor industry is littered with such tragedies. On the one hand our motor industry could easily produce far more lorries, coaches, cars, vans and motor-cycles than our united home and export trades can absorb. On the other hand, America is perpetually attempting to snatch all our markets, and enjoy great vantages in her onslaughts, whilst France and Italy to a far smaller degree are also ceaselessly on the attack. Finally, though there is never any very substantial divergence in the value offered at a given price, yet some apparently trifling innovation will make all the difference between a car being a best seller or having to struggle for even a tiny slice of the market. An example of this may be identified in the Riley Nine, which has boomed so enormously of late years. Produced by a factory which was originally small, and had faced many buffetings, it leapt into favour largely by dint of a very shapely and attractive saloon body. This gave it the victory in many personal selections; and its owners then discovered that it was very quiet, rather fast, extremely reliable, and handled very pleasantly. From that time it has never looked back. But if the artists in the Riley coachbuilding shop had endowed its coachwork with more ordinary contours, it is very doubtful whether it would ever have had the chance to convince the buying public of its more fundamental excellencies.

* * *

We stand now on the verge of fresh convulsions in the popular car market, which must unquestionably produce a perfect holocaust of men and of share values and of plants. The new Ford works at Dagenham are steadily approaching completion, and when they begin to produce, this good car will, of course, be the spearpoint of a terrific sales campaign which will threaten many cars now selling freely at similar or higher prices. Sir William Morris is beginning to get his new £100 carette out in quantities, and the older sevens and eights and nines at higher figures will necessarily find their sales declining. The new Rover at £85 will be out before very long. The Hillman combine is shortly launching a new popular car on the grand scale. Before these repercussions have died down, some of the threatened factories will presumably be well advanced with their counter-blasts. These oscillations concern business on the large scale. It is no longer, as it was in pre-War days, a matter of missing a dividend, or of reducing 10 per cent. to 3 per cent., or of subsisting on reserve funds till times mend. Mass production means that a capital of a million or more, a staff numbering thousands, a whole suburb or township are involved; and an unpopular model or a model which cannot be profitably produced if its price is cut £10 may imply ruin for a great many persons. The old adage says that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. We might amend it to-day to say that the men who build motor-cars sleep ill; and we ought to spare a sympathetic thought for them as we roll happily past the young green hedgerows in the cars which their insomnia has furnished.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

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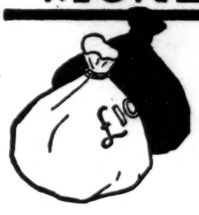

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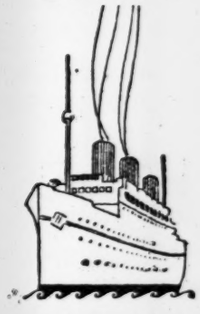

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PLAYTIME

BRIDGE

BY CALIBAN.

HOW TO BID AT CONTRACT: A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIVE HANDS.

V. Suit Bid of One with response by Partner of Two No Trumps.

	♠ 95 ♥ A1064 ♦ KQ82 ♣ K108	
♠ 104 ♥ 9872 ♦ A763 ♣ 942	N W E S	♠ Q62 ♥ QJ5 ♦ J104 ♣ A753
	♠ AKJ873 ♥ K3 ♦ 95 ♣ QJ6	

Score: East-West, one game; North-South, love. East deals.

The bidding is as follows:

East ..	No Bid	No Bid	No Bid
South ..	1 ♠	4 ♠	
West ..	No Bid	No Bid	
North ..	2 N.T.	No Bid	

NOTES ON THE BIDDING.

The bids of East, South and West call for no comment. The key-bid of the deal is North's Two No Trumps. He has a good hand—a hand which, were he not vulnerable, would justify an opening bid—yet he can neither support his partner's suit nor suggest an alternative of his own. The "minimum response" of One No Trump (see Hand No. IV) would be altogether too weak. Hence the bid of Two No Trumps, which says succinctly to partner: "I can't support your suit; I've no good suit of my own; but I can offer you about 2½ honour-tricks."

This bid of Two No Trumps is *not* a forcing bid: it does *not* impose on partner the obligation of keeping the bidding open. If South has only a minimum bid, he will (normally) leave the Two No Trumps alone.

South, however, is half a trick over his minimum in honour-tricks, and his trump suit is very strong. He can therefore afford to raise his bid to Four. The ten-trick contract is no certainty, but the odds are distinctly in its favour.

As the cards lie, North-South make eleven tricks.

CALIBAN'S CONTRACT CAPTIONS—No. 7

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Two honour-tricks and a half, or so,
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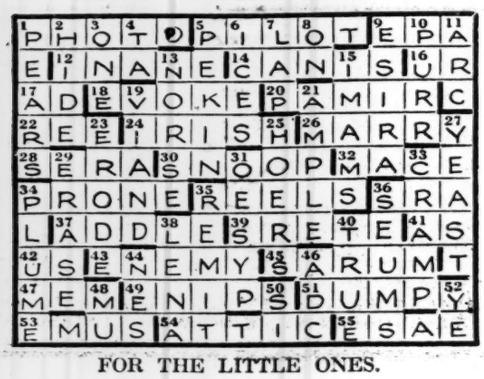
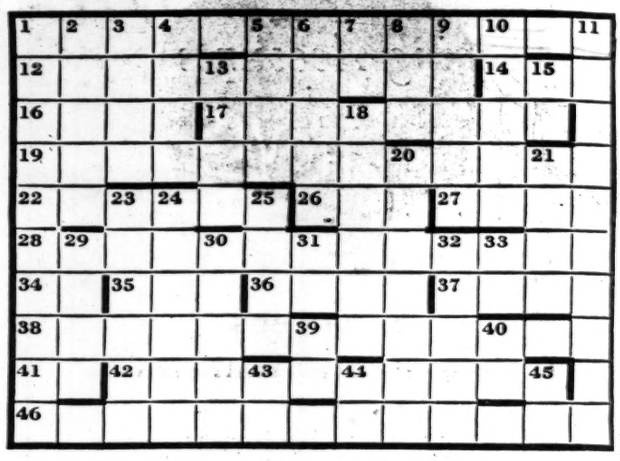
While other suits are weak or short.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



DERANGEMENT OF EPITAPHS.

The clues italicised are anagrams.

ACROSS

1. Johnsonian activity.
12. A sandboy's chief proclivity.
14. Salt? or a backward glance of one?
16. A shock? There's just the chance of one.
17. From birth—as one might say—inclined.
19. My friend's to Papal sway inclined.
22. Yes, yes, a little mammal he.
26. Who does? Why, all the family.
27. *The centre's my locality.*
28. Postponement of finality.
34. Villain becomes vociferous.
35. Ex mouth—it's metalliferous.
36 *rev.* A fiddler, famed of old, appears.
37. Just think whence all the gold appears.
38. Receptive—end's a case, I know.
41. Initials of a place I know.
42. He isn't too intelligible.
46. A witness might be eligible.

DOWN

1. The Prince of Whales and such as he.
2. Touch wood? Dark, dark to touch is he.
3. A flowing back's intended here.
4. *Your milk, Monsieur, appended here.*
5. *Some puss, and likewise part of him.*
6. In bottle? but how smart of him.
7. Our wooden walls are metal now.
8. The Thespians are in fettle now.
9. Inverted nap—the skin takes off.
10. Plane in an upward spin takes off.
11. Compel them to produce it all.
13. In Lancashire, no use at all.
15. Manhattan, Bronx, are known to me.
18. It looks extremely prone to me.
20. *In love with asininity.*
21. For—or against—the Trinity.
23 *rev.* Grow, or from state to state to pass.
24. I think some bishops wait to pass.
25 *rev.* Who nowhere mapped with clarity?
29. Suggests particularity.
30 *rev.* "—— Greeks and their gifts" (the phrase we know).
31. Found in the fire most days, we know.
32. *A touch, a feature—both, it seems.*
33 *rev.* The dear old three-toed sloth, it seems.
39. High honour, to our knowledge, is.
40. Suggestive of ontologies.
43. State Sherman gained admission to.
44. Hat, hatless. (Preposition too.)
45. Infinitive 'twill indicate.

Your prowess, friends, now vindicate.

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